STORY BY KYO SHIRODAIRA ART BY CHASHIBA KATASE

IN/SPECTRE

6

IN/SPECTRE
6

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CHAPTER 11: "THE UNSTOPPABLE AVENGER"

SHE HAD OFFERED TWO SOLUTIONS.
BUT THEY WEREN'T ENOUGH...
...TO ERASE THE MONSTER THAT IS STEEL LADY NANASE.
WHOOSH
WHAM

ZSH
FWAM

CLANK
GWOH
GNN
GNN
GN

ドドドッ
KA-WHUMP
バキ
KRAK
バキ
KRAK
ドォッ
BOOM
ぱら
PATTER
ぱら
PATTER
ボッ
BWOH
ドズッ
THOONK

ブチ
SNAP
バキ
KRAK
チ
バキ
KRAK
TWITCH
TWITCH
バシャ
SPLASH
COUGH
LET US MOVE ON...
...TO SOLUTION NUMBER THREE.

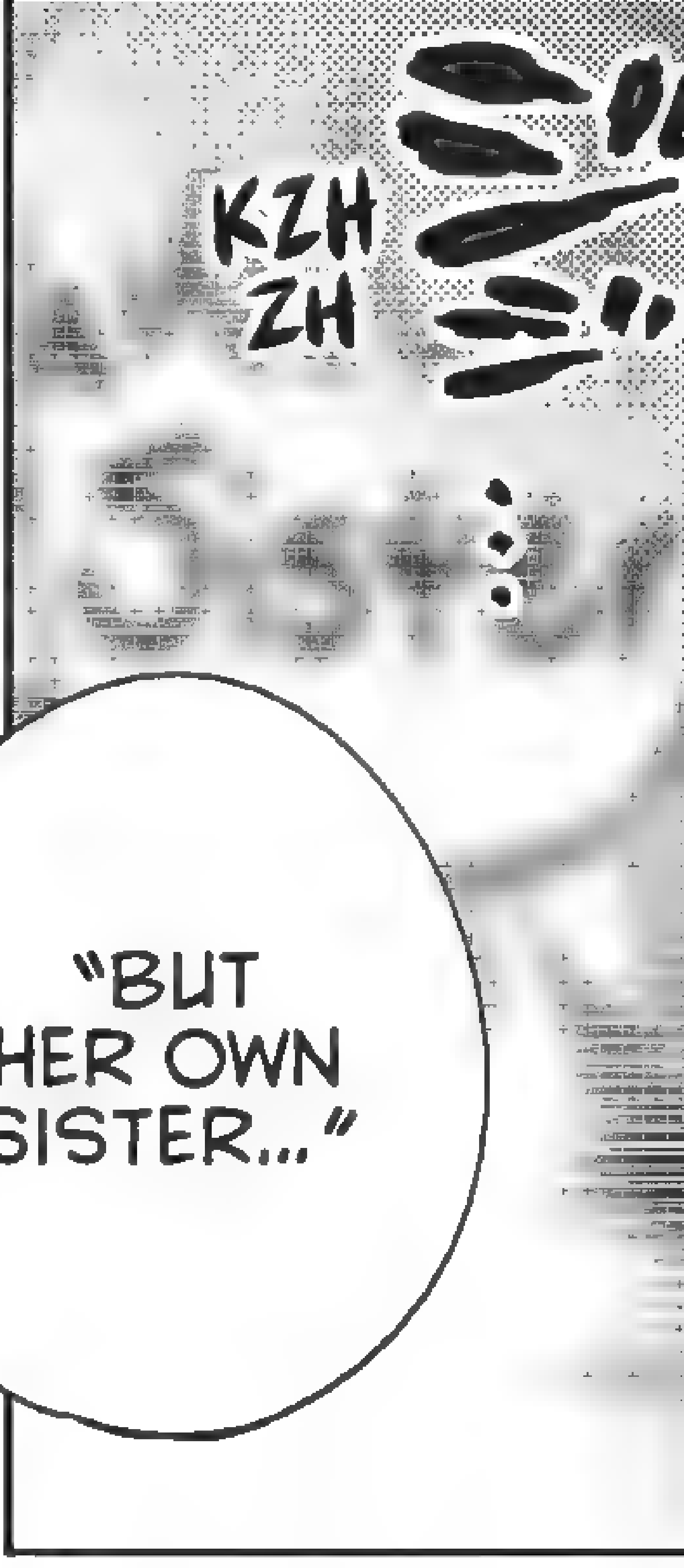
KZH ZH
ZH
NAME-LESS
ANON
"THIS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT MANY TIMES BEFORE, BUT KARIN NANASE DIDN'T TRY TO DODGE THE AVALANCHE OF STEEL BEAMS.
SHE LOOKED RIGHT AT THEM, AND LET THEM CRUSH HER."
"WHATEVER HER MENTAL STATE..."
"...THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HER PASSING CAN ONLY LEAD TO ONE CONCLUSION: THAT SHE HAD ACCEPTED HER DEATH."

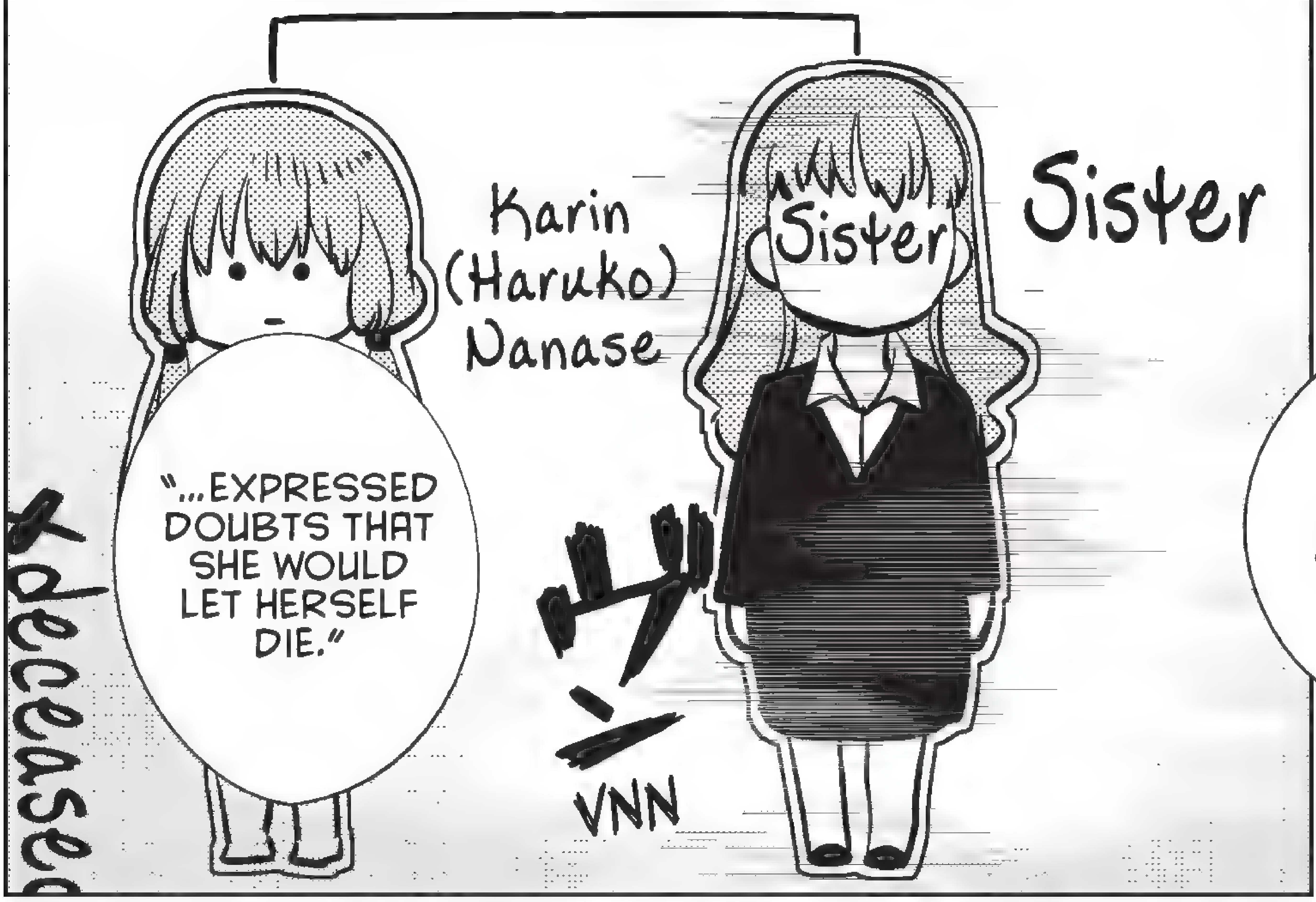
FWOOM
"IN THAT CASE,
EVEN IF SHE WERE TO COME BACK AS A GHOST, WOULD THAT GHOST REALLY BE SO AGGRESSIVE AS TO EARN A NAME LIKE 'STEEL LADY NANASE'?"
KA-KLONG
"IF KARIN NANASE WAS THAT AGGRESSIVE,
WOULD IT MAKE SENSE FOR HER TO LET HERSELF DIE WITHOUT A FIGHT?"
"STEEL LADY NANASE'S APPEARANCE...
...DOESN'T FIT WITH THE WAY KARIN NANASE DIED."

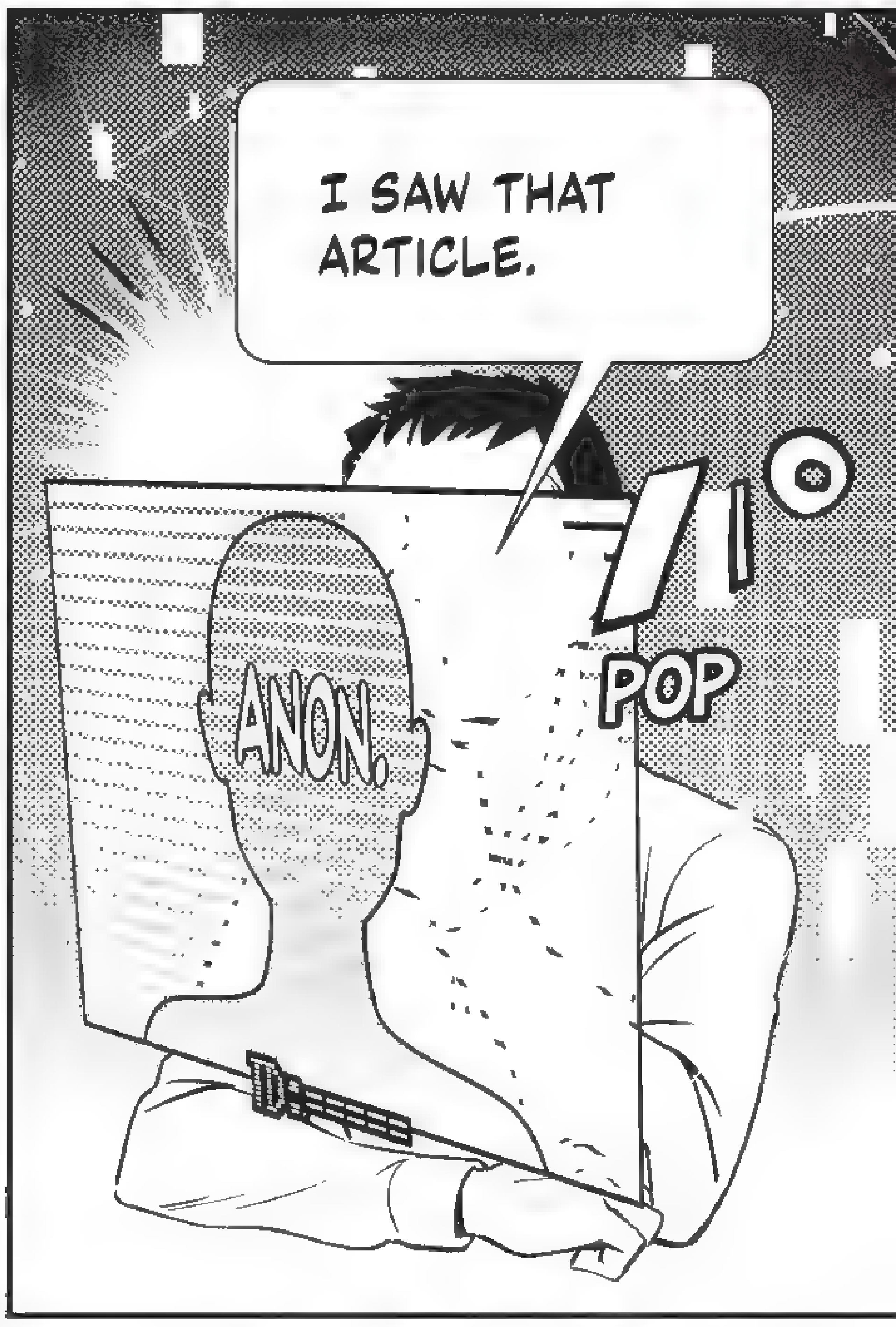
"I PRESENTED A THEORY THAT RECONCILED THE TWO, BUT IT WAS REJECTED."
"SO ALLOW ME TO FORMULATE A NEW THEORY."
"STEEL LADY NANASE IS NOT A SPECTRE.
SHE IS A FAKE GHOST, DELIBERATELY CONJURED UP BY A LIVING HUMAN.
AND IT WAS ALSO A LIVING HUMAN BEING WHO KILLED DETECTIVE TERADA."
"IT IS BECAUSE STEEL LADY NANASE IS NOT KARIN NANASE, THAT THE FORMER'S APPEARANCE AND THE LATTER'S DEATH CONTRADICT EACH OTHER."
KZH ZH
Steel Lady Nanase Investigation Headquarters
KRZH

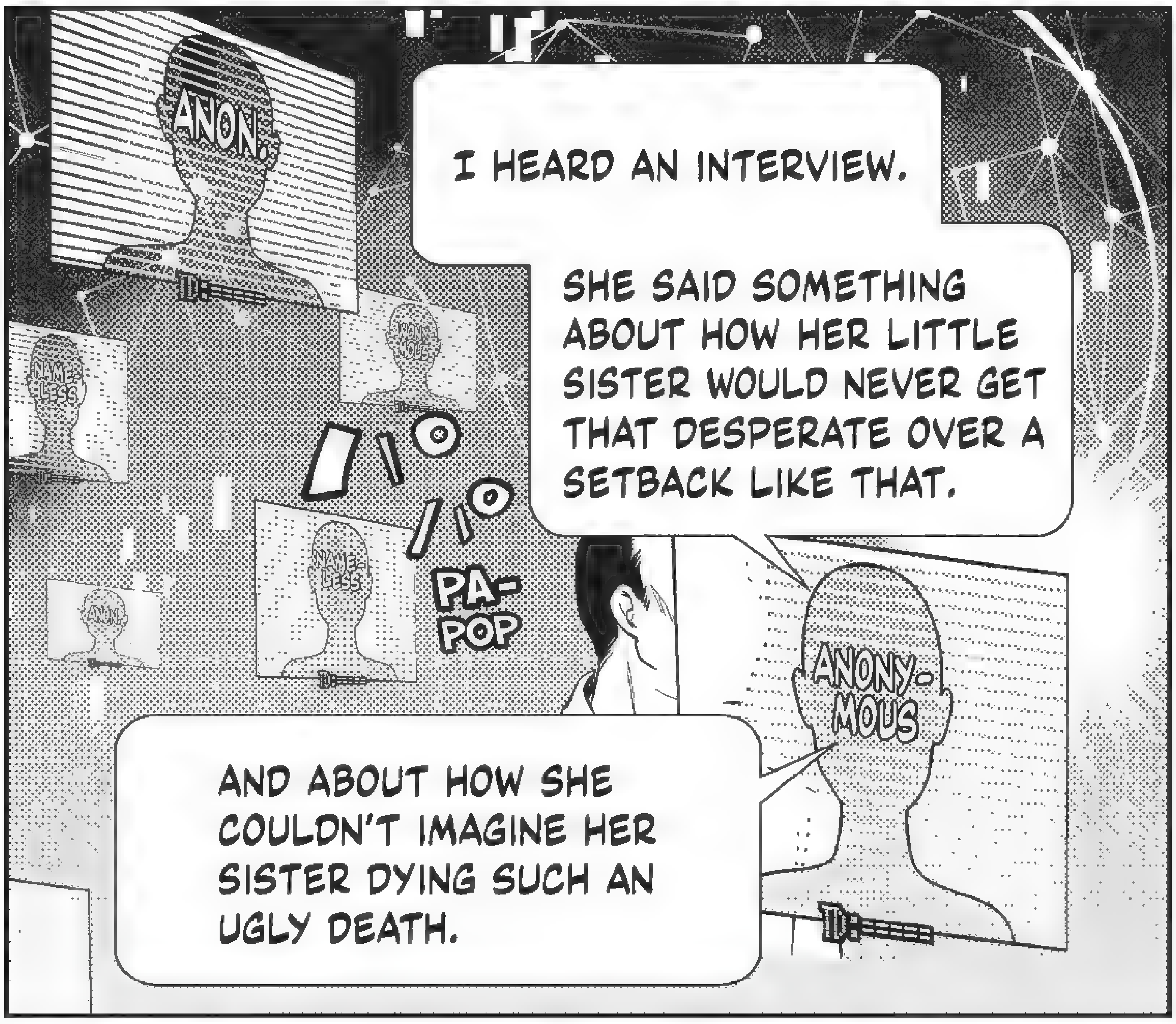
ZSHH
ザアッ
Steel Lady Nanase Investigation Headquarters
"I WOULD LIKE TO REVISIT...
...THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO KARIN NANASE'S DEATH."
Steel Lady Nanase Investigation Headquarters
VNN
Karin (Haruk Nanas
deceased
SUICI
SQUIK
キュ
Investigation Head-
"ONE OPINION THAT HAS BEEN EXPRESSED...
...IS THAT IT WASN'T LIKE HER TO DIE THAT WAY."
Karin (Haru Na
deceased
"THERE ARE INDEED DUBIOUS ASPECTS TO HER DEATH."
Accident
Accident bordering on suicide
POP
Faceless corpse
YEAH.
DID THAT GET INTO THE NEWS SOMEWHERE?

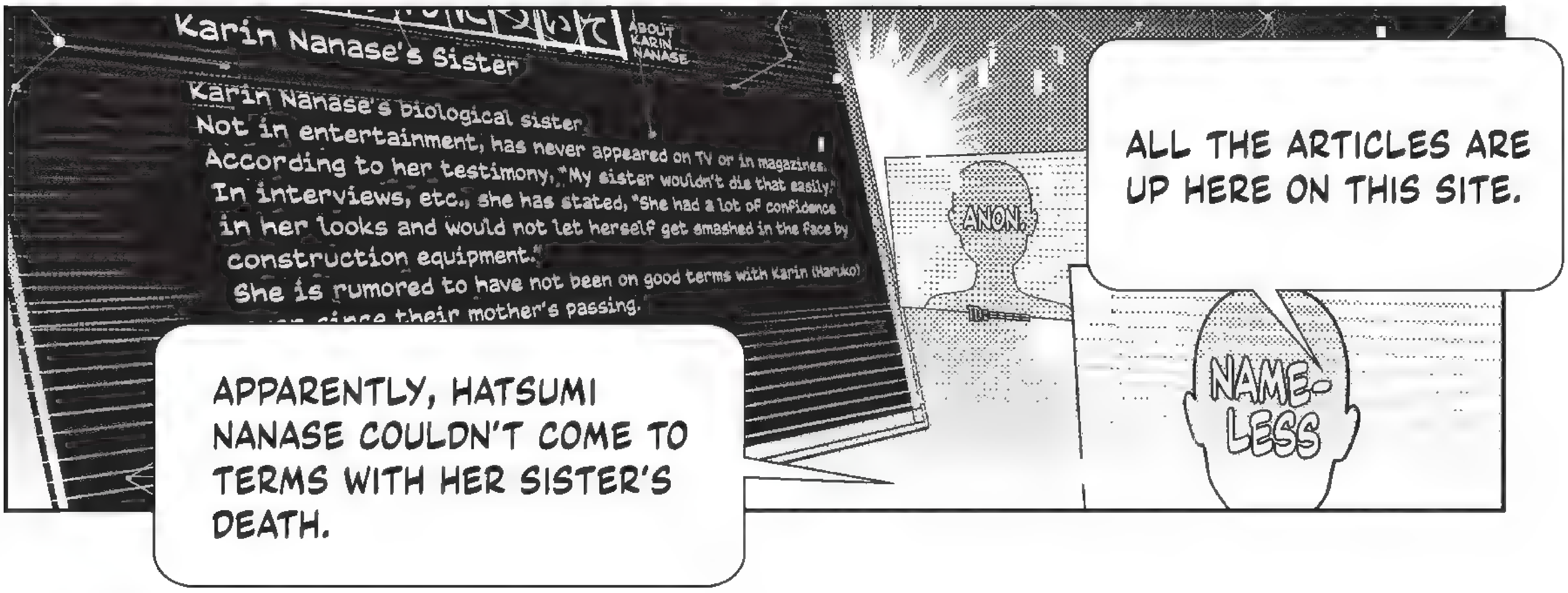
"SHE HAD BEEN DRIVEN TO THE EDGE."
"SHE LOST THE STATUS THAT SHE'D WORKED SO HARD TO BUILD IN THE ENTERTAINMENT WORLD, SHE HAD LITTLE HOPE OF REGAINING IT, AND NOW SHE WAS SUSPECTED OF PATRICIDE."
"IF IT WAS HER OWN FATHER'S NOTE THAT STARTED IT ALL,
THEN EVERYTHING ABOUT HER OLD LIFE HAD FALLEN OUT FROM UNDER HER."
"THAT'S AMPLE MOTIVE FOR SUICIDE."


KZH ZH
Sister
"BUT HER OWN SISTER..."


Sister
Sister
Karin (Haruko) Nanase
deceased
"...EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT SHE WOULD LET HERSELF DIE."
VNN


I SAW THAT ARTICLE.
POP
ANON.

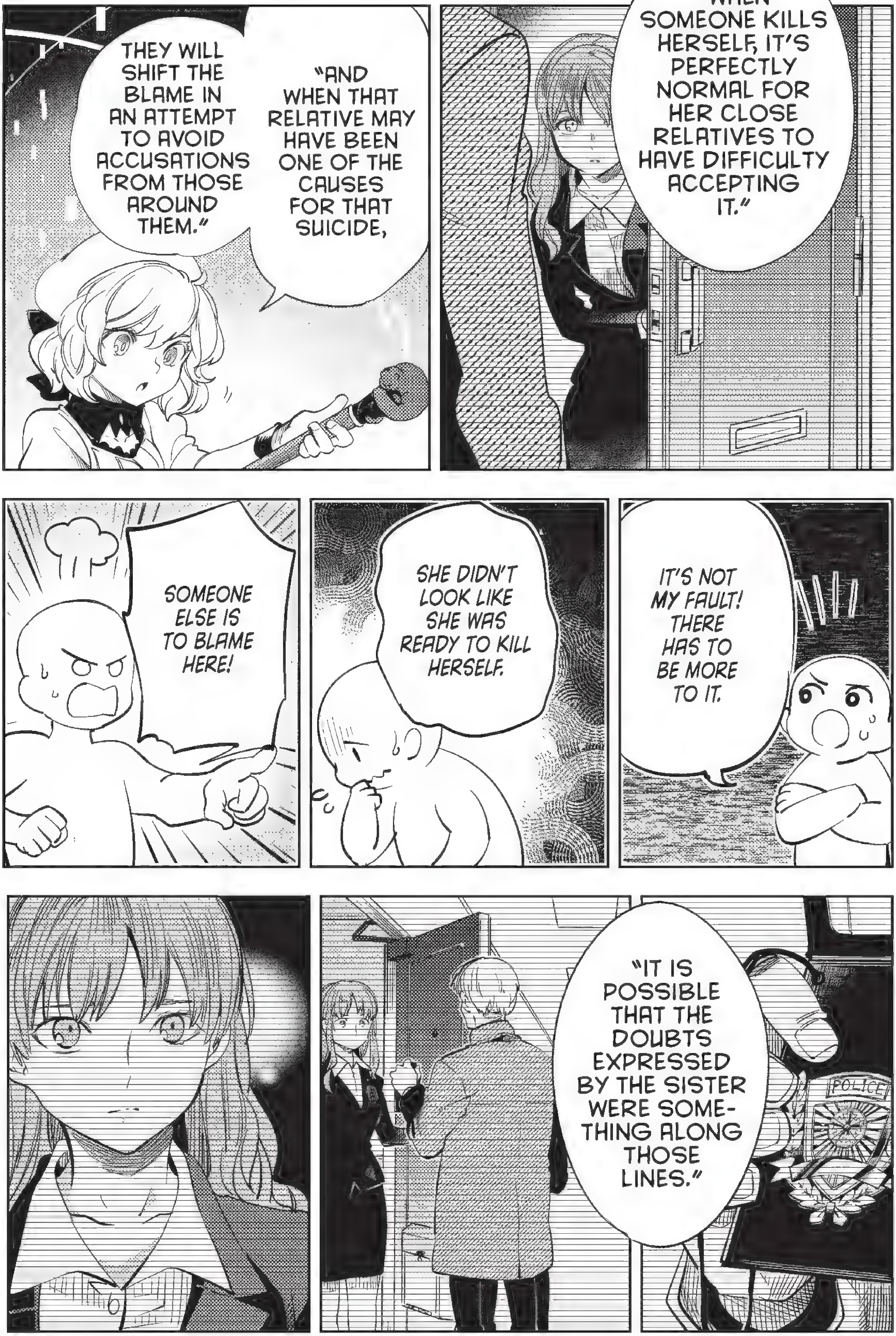

I HEARD AN INTERVIEW.
SHE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HOW HER LITTLE SISTER WOULD NEVER GET THAT DESPERATE OVER A SETBACK LIKE THAT.
ANON.
NAME-LESS
PA-POP
ANONY-MOUS
AND ABOUT HOW SHE COULDN'T IMAGINE HER SISTER DYING SUCH AN UGLY DEATH.


Karin Nanase's Sister

ABOUT KARIN NANASE

Karin Nanase's biological sister
Not in entertainment, has never appeared on TV or in magazines.
According to her testimony, "My sister wouldn't die that easily."
In interviews, etc., she has stated, "She had a lot of confidence in her looks and would not let herself get smashed in the face by construction equipment."
She is rumored to have not been on good terms with Karin (Haruko) since their mother's passing.

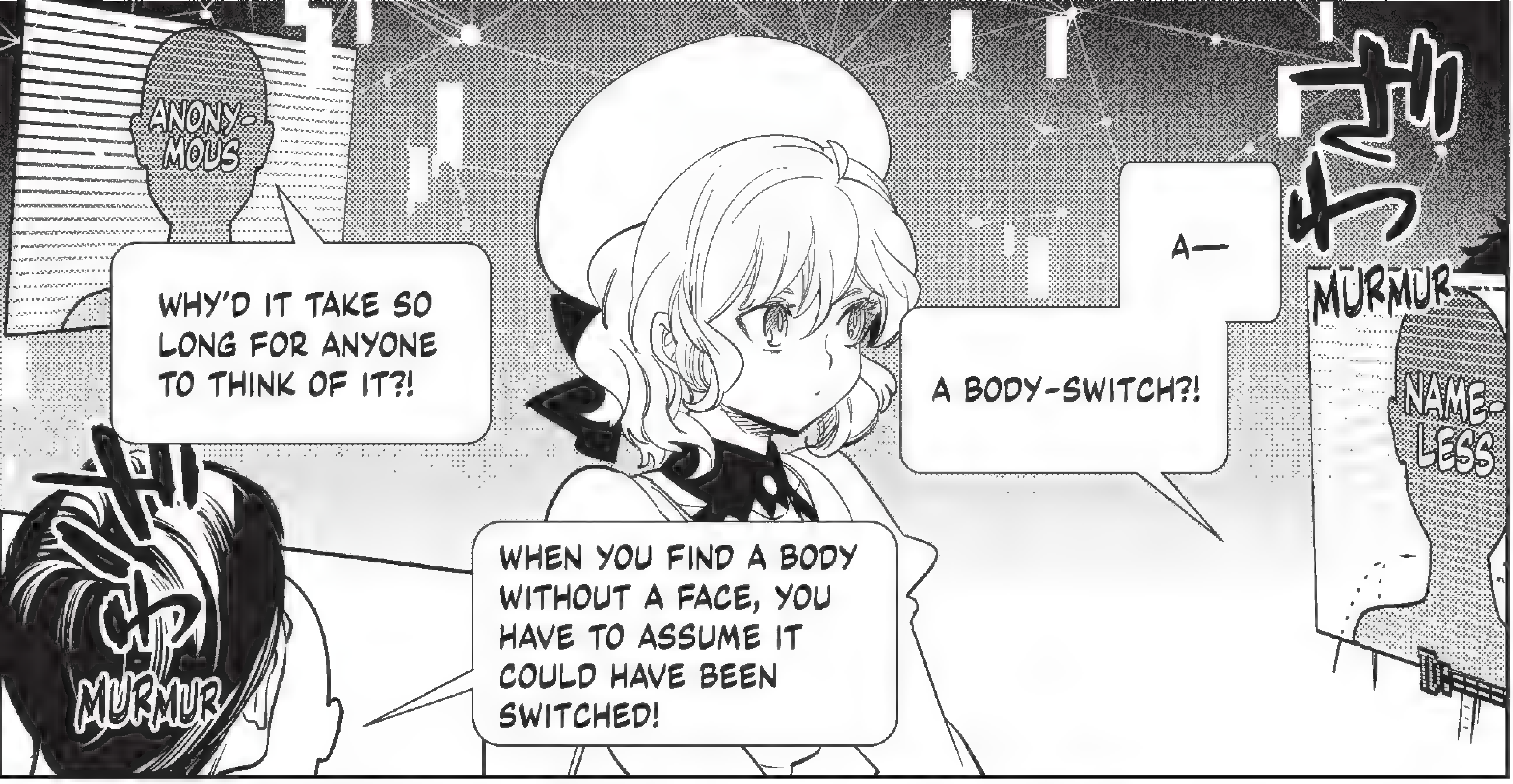
ALL THE ARTICLES ARE UP HERE ON THIS SITE.
ANON.
NAME-LESS
APPARENTLY, HATSUMI NANASE COULDN'T COME TO TERMS WITH HER SISTER'S DEATH.

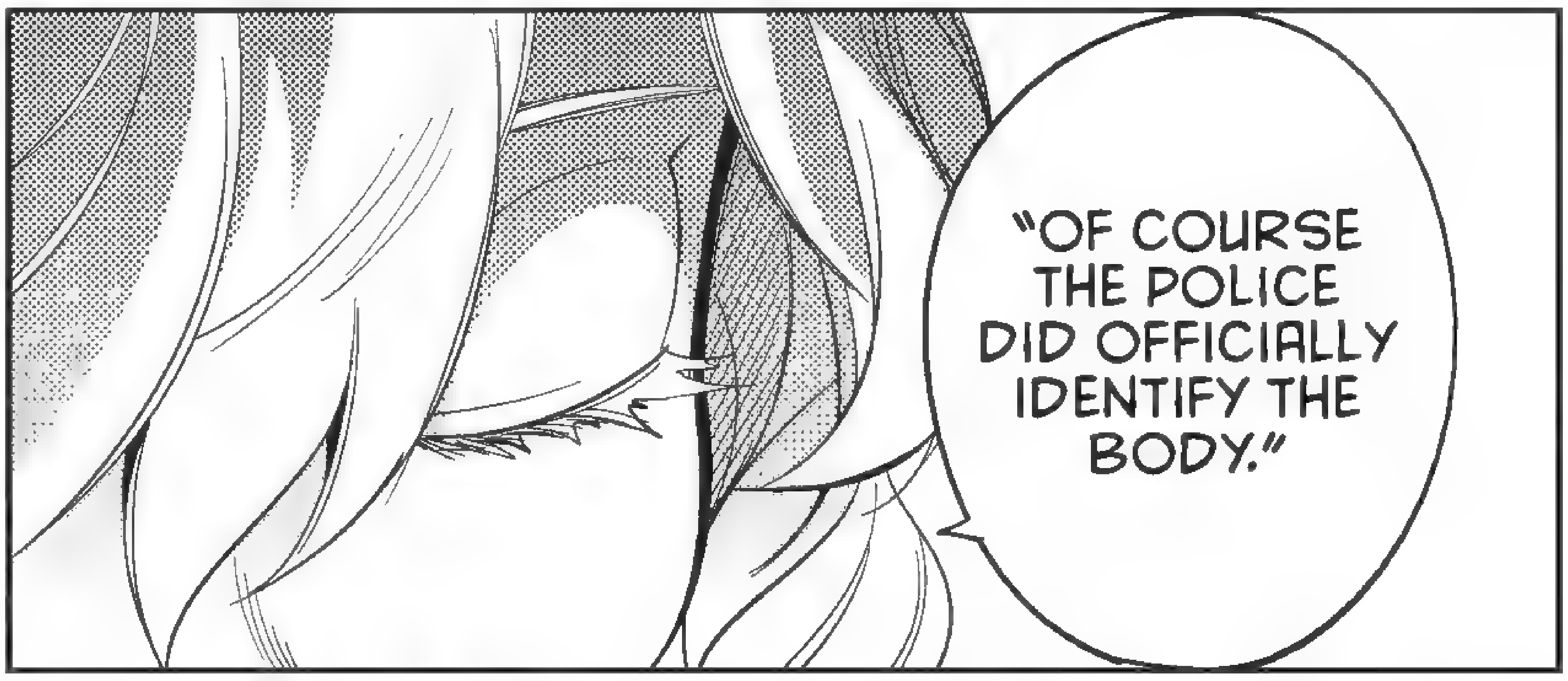

"WHEN SOMEONE KILLS HERSELF, IT'S PERFECTLY NORMAL FOR HER CLOSE RELATIVES TO HAVE DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING IT."
"AND WHEN THAT RELATIVE MAY HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE CAUSES FOR THAT SUICIDE,
THEY WILL SHIFT THE BLAME IN AN ATTEMPT TO AVOID ACCUSATIONS FROM THOSE AROUND THEM."
IT'S NOT MY FAULT! THERE HAS TO BE MORE TO IT.
SHE DIDN'T LOOK LIKE SHE WAS READY TO KILL HERSELF.
SOMEONE ELSE IS TO BLAME HERE!
"IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE DOUBTS EXPRESSED BY THE SISTER WERE SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES."
POLICE

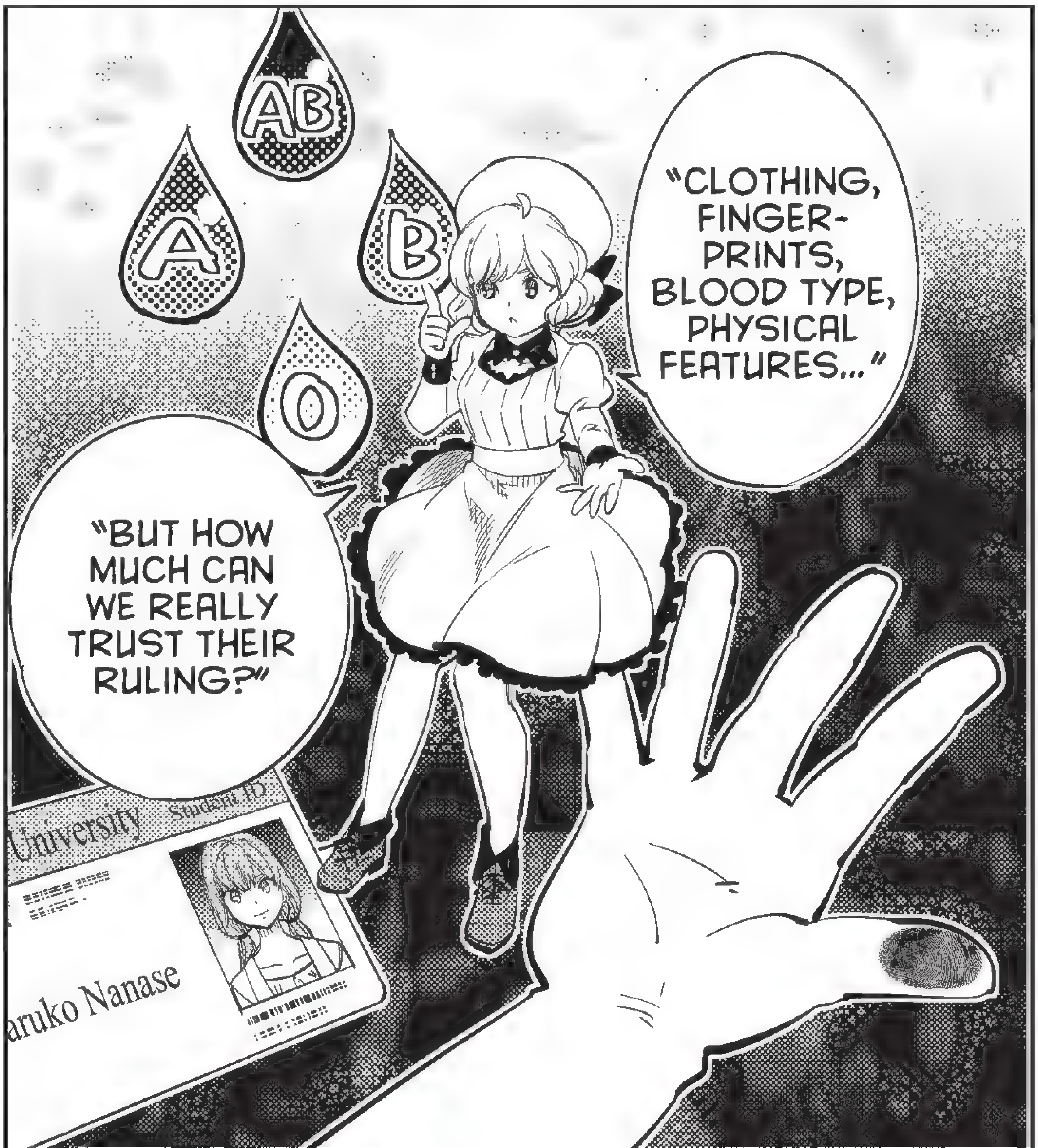
KARIN NANASE
Theme song to "Youth! The Girl Who Breathes Fire!"
Karin Nanase
火炎放射器 わたし
My Flamethrower and Me
ANON
HATSUMI DID INHERIT THE FORTUNE. THAT DOES MAKE HER AN EASY SUSPECT.
ALL THE PROFITS FROM THE PHOTO BOOK WENT TO HER AGENCY, BUT THE ROYALTIES ON THAT SINGLE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN INSIGNIFICANT.
BUT IF SHE WAS AFTER THE INHERITANCE, SHE WOULDN'T GO AROUND TELLING EVERYBODY THAT KARIN WOULDN'T KILL HERSELF.
Accident
celess
rpse
YEAH. SHE WOULD BE THE FIRST SUSPECT IF THEY LOOKED INTO MURDER.
SHE WOULD PUT ON A SAD FACE AND MAKE SOME KIND OF INNOCUOUS COMMENT.
"EXACTLY.
WHETHER OUT OF SELF-DEFENSE, OR FOR SOME OTHER REASON..."
"...THE THINGS HATSUMI SAID WOULD HAVE STIRRED UP SUSPICIONS IN EVERYONE AROUND HER, INCLUDING THE POLICE."
"WHY WOULD SHE RISK THAT, JUST BECAUSE SHE FELT GUILTY ABOUT THE SUICIDE?"

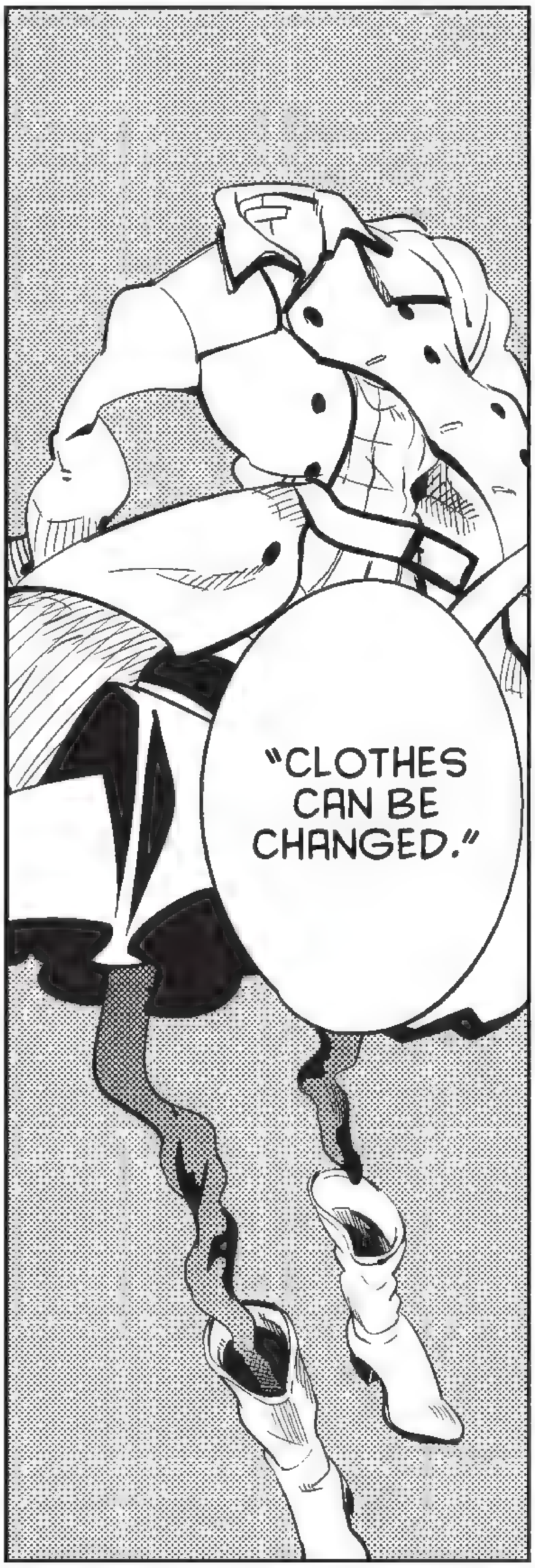
HATSUMI HAD HER DOUBTS FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
MORGUE

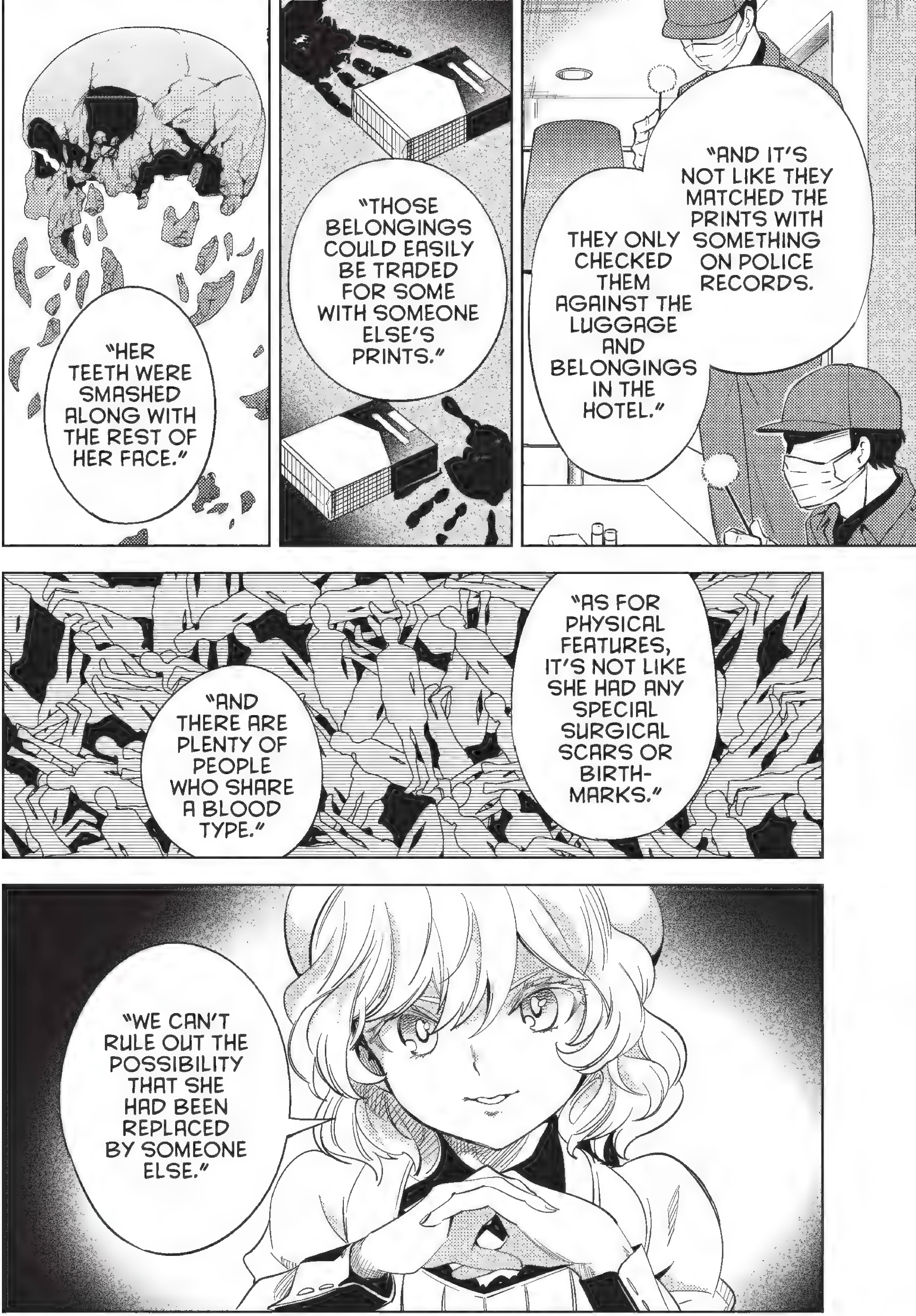
"WAS KARIN NANASE, NÉE HARUKO NANASE, REALLY DEAD?"
"ARE THEY SURE IT WASN'T SOMEONE ELSE WHOSE FACE WAS SMASHED IN BY THOSE GIRDERS?"
SUCH WERE HER THOUGHTS.


ざわ
MURMUR
A—
A BODY-SWITCH?!
NAMELESS
WHEN YOU FIND A BODY WITHOUT A FACE, YOU HAVE TO ASSUME IT COULD HAVE BEEN SWITCHED!
WHY'D IT TAKE SO LONG FOR ANYONE TO THINK OF IT?!
ANONYMOUS
ざわ
MURMUR


"OF COURSE THE POLICE DID OFFICIALLY IDENTIFY THE BODY."


"CLOTHING, FINGERPRINTS, BLOOD TYPE, PHYSICAL FEATURES..."
AB
A
B
O
"BUT HOW MUCH CAN WE REALLY TRUST THEIR RULING?"
University
Student ID
aruko Nanase


"CLOTHES CAN BE CHANGED."


"AND IT'S NOT LIKE THEY MATCHED THE PRINTS WITH SOMETHING ON POLICE RECORDS.
THEY ONLY CHECKED THEM AGAINST THE LUGGAGE AND BELONGINGS IN THE HOTEL."
"THOSE BELONGINGS COULD EASILY BE TRADED FOR SOME WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S PRINTS."
"HER TEETH WERE SMASHED ALONG WITH THE REST OF HER FACE."
"AS FOR PHYSICAL FEATURES, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE HAD ANY SPECIAL SURGICAL SCARS OR BIRTHMARKS."
"AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE WHO SHARE A BLOOD TYPE."
"WE CAN'T RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SHE HAD BEEN REPLACED BY SOMEONE ELSE."

POP
BUT THOSE BREASTS WERE A DEFINING FEATURE!
ANON.
YEAH. THEY WERE HUGE.
NAMELESS
PA-POP
"IF THERE HAD BEEN A MAJOR DIFFERENCE IN BUST SIZE, IT WOULD BE OBVIOUS THAT IT WAS SOMEONE ELSE.
BUT WOULD POLICE REALLY TAKE EXACT MEASUREMENTS OF A DEAD BODY'S BREASTS?"
ANON.
"EVEN IF THE BUST DOESN'T SEEM TO QUITE MATCH HER GRAVURE PHOTOS, PICTURES CAN BE DOCTORED.
ALL THE STRESS FROM RUNNING FROM THE MEDIA COULD HAVE CAUSED THEM TO GO DOWN IN SIZE."
"THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF WAYS TO INTERPRET IT."
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GO DOWN IN SIZE? THEY AIN'T BALLOONS!
ANON.
DO BREASTS SHRINK THAT EASILY?
ANONYMOUS
I THINK WHOEVER'S POSTING THIS HAS A THING FOR FLAT CHESTS. THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND BOSOMS.
NAMELESS
BIG CATCH
TKKA TKKA TKKA
ガタガタ
BAM!
タンッ
WINCE
びくっ

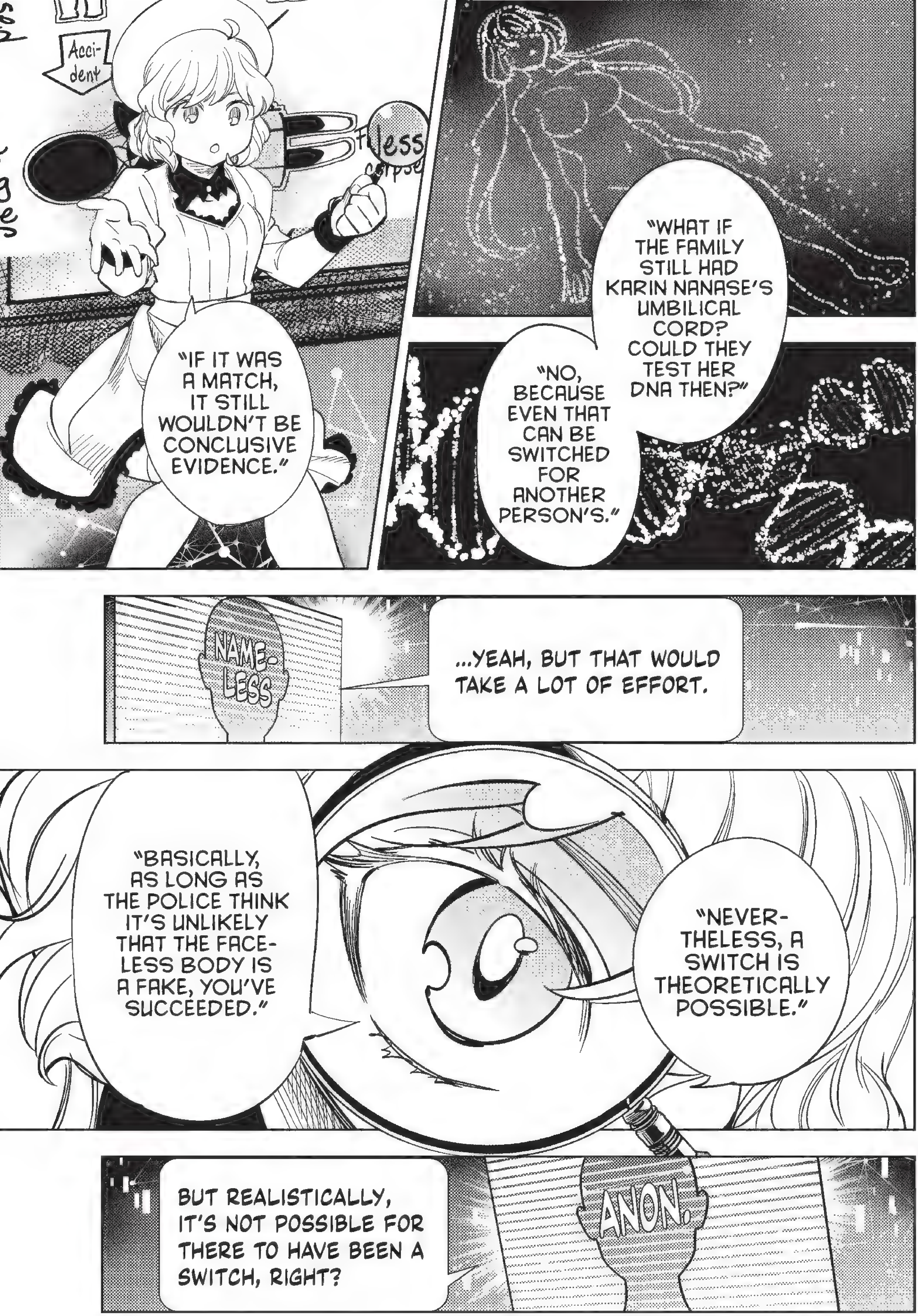
<453> Name: kuebiko 09/04 22:55 ID:[illegible]
With a lot of girls, the first thing to go when they start a diet is some inches off their breasts.

They're big balls of fat–they're easy to burn off.

And I bet the bigger they are, the faster they burn

Not to mention, stress messes with a woman's hc[illegible]ones, and the stress Karin Nanase was under was unfa[illegible]omable

ウガガ
GA-GRRRR
COME ON, JUST IGNORE THEM...
WELL, BREASTS ASIDE,
COULDN'T THEY HAVE ANALYZED HER DNA?
ANONY-MOUS
ID:
CLENCH
"THE POLICE WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR UNLESS THEY HAVE STRONG ENOUGH REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THERE HAD BEEN A SWITCH."
CHAK
"THE PRINTS MATCHED, SO WHY WOULD THE POLICE SUSPECT ANYTHING?
AND HOW WOULD THEY GET KARIN NANASE'S DNA TO COMPARE IT WITH?"
"FROM HAIR LEFT ON THE BRUSH IN THE HOTEL ROOM?
IT WOULD BE A SIMPLE MATTER TO REPLACE IT WITH THE OTHER PERSON'S HAIRBRUSH."


"WHAT IF THE FAMILY STILL HAD KARIN NANASE'S UMBILICAL CORD? COULD THEY TEST HER DNA THEN?"
"NO, BECAUSE EVEN THAT CAN BE SWITCHED FOR ANOTHER PERSON'S."
Acci-dent
Faceless corpse
"IF IT WAS A MATCH, IT STILL WOULDN'T BE CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE."
...YEAH, BUT THAT WOULD TAKE A LOT OF EFFORT.
NAME-LESS
"NEVER-THELESS, A SWITCH IS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE."
"BASICALLY, AS LONG AS THE POLICE THINK IT'S UNLIKELY THAT THE FACE-LESS BODY IS A FAKE, YOU'VE SUCCEEDED."
ANON.
BUT REALISTICALLY, IT'S NOT POSSIBLE FOR THERE TO HAVE BEEN A SWITCH, RIGHT?

"WHETHER IT IS REALISTICALLY POSSIBLE OR NOT IS IRRELEVANT."
Sister
Acci-dent
Deceased
"WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS WHETHER OR NOT HATSUMI..."
Sister
Sister
ZSH
Karin (Haruko) Nanase
Sister
Accident
Doubts
"...SUSPECTED THAT THE BODY MAY HAVE ACTUALLY BELONGED TO SOMEBODY ELSE."

FROM HATSUMI NANASE'S PERSPECTIVE, HER SISTER'S DEATH WAS VERY UNCHARACTERISTIC OF HER.
HER INTELLIGENT,
SHREWD LITTLE SISTER WAS A RISING STAR IN THE IDOL SCENE.
SHE WOULD NEVER HAVE DIED SO EASILY.
IT ONLY MAKES SENSE THAT HATSUMI WOULD THINK THIS WAY.
IN FACT...
...THE MORE YOU YOURSELF HAVE ACTED OUT OF SPITE,
THE MORE LIKELY YOU ARE TO SUSPECT SOMEONE ELSE OF DOING THE SAME.

"NOW, LET'S GO BACK A LITTLE FURTHER."
ぱん
CLAP
ぱっ
POP
"THE NOTE LEFT BY KARIN NANASE'S FATHER...
I EXPLAINED EARLIER HOW AND WHY IT CAME TO BE WRITTEN."
"EVEN IF MY EXPLANATION IS FALSE, THE NOTE'S EXISTENCE REMAINS A FACT."
"THEN HOW DID THE NOTE FIND ITS WAY TO THE MEDIA?"
Publisher

"IT'S NOT LIKE THE FATHER WROTE ALL OF HIS EMOTIONS ONTO A BLOG OR A WEBSITE."
"HE WROTE IT BY HAND IN A PERSONAL DIARY."
"SO HOW DID IT SO CONVENIENTLY MAKE ITS WAY TO THE PUBLIC?"
WAFT
"DID HE ASK SOMEONE TO GIVE THE NOTE TO THE MEDIA AFTER HIS DEATH, AS I SUGGESTED BEFORE?"
"OR DID SOMEONE FIND THE NOTE AND SELL IT TO THE PRESS?"
Father
×deceased
きゅ
SQUEAK
"EITHER WAY, THIS DEPENDED ON THERE BEING A 'SOMEONE.'"
カ
CLACK

Publisher
Note
"SOMEONE GAVE IT TO THE MEDIA."
Father
Note
Sister
Sister
"AND THAT SOMEONE... COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN KARIN NANASE'S SISTER."
"DID HATSUMI THINK FONDLY OF HER SISTER?"
"THE YOUNGER SISTER WAS GIFTED WITH TALENT AND BEAUTY, WHICH SHE USED TO GAIN GLORIOUS SUCCESS.
MEANWHILE, NO ONE HAD MUCH TO SAY AT ALL ABOUT THE ELDER."
"IT MAY BE THAT THE SCOUTS ONLY WANTED THE YOUNGER SISTER..."
"AND THE TWO WERE CONSTANTLY COMPARED, WITH THE ELDER SISTER ALWAYS DEEMED INFERIOR."
I feel like Haruk
ll me.
By the time you read th
ote
I have no doubt that she will have murdered me
There's no doubt

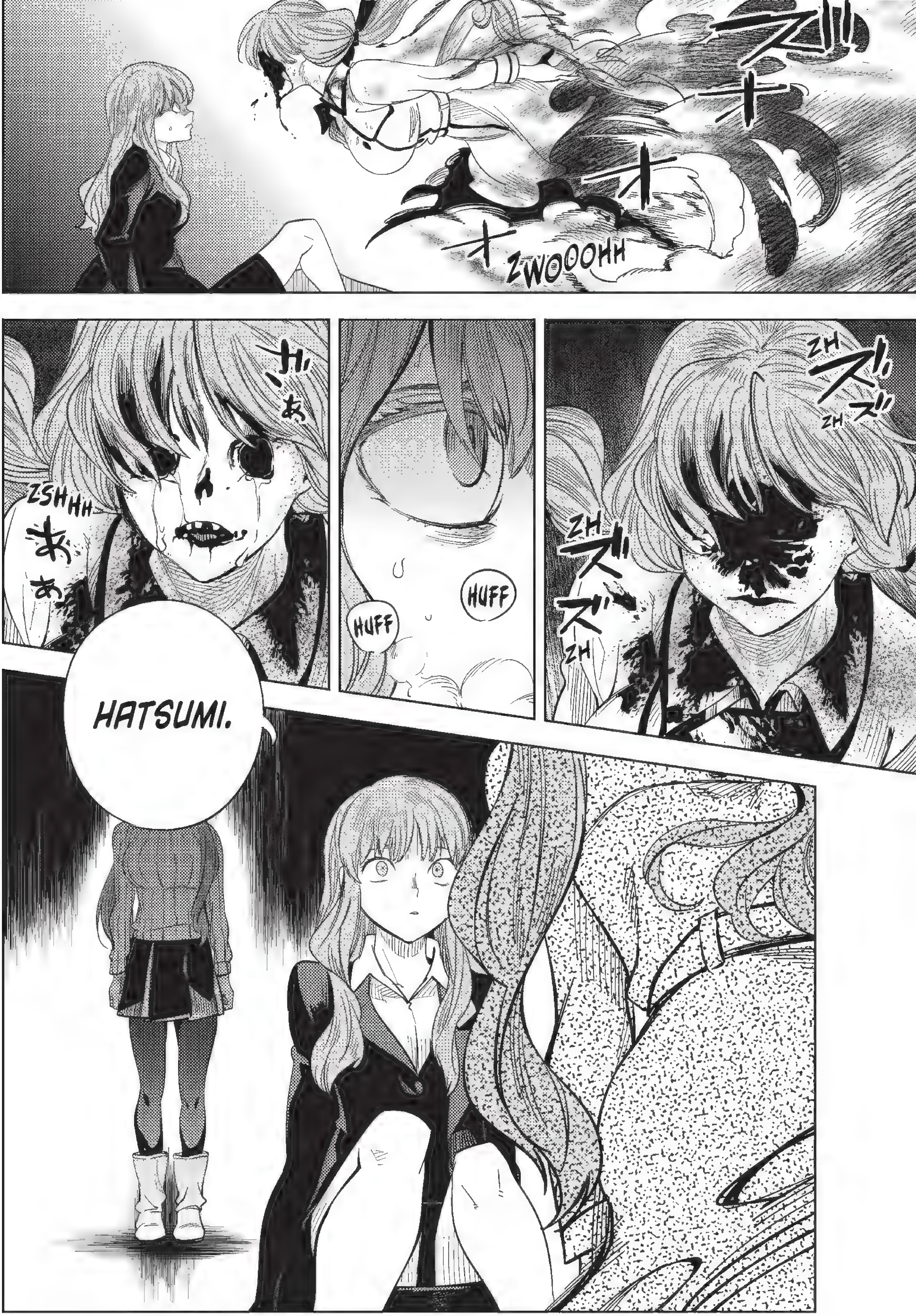
"IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THE TWO SISTERS WERE ON GOOD TERMS."
"WHEN KARIN NANASE WAS SUSPECTED OF MURDER,
"HER SISTER DIDN'T OFFER A SINGLE WORD OF DEFENSE."
SQUEAK
Not friend
"SHE RAN FROM INTERVIEWS, AND WHEN KARIN NANASE DIED, SHE WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.
NOR DID SHE MAKE ANY STATEMENTS CRITICIZING THE PRESS FOR THE STRAIN THEY PUT ON HER SISTER."
"WOULD ANY OF THAT HAVE BEEN THE CASE IF THE SISTERS LIKED EACH OTHER?"
Father
Note
Publisher
Sister
Sister
Karin (Haruko) Nanase
quarters
Not friends
× deceased
Accident
Doubts
Accident bordering on suicide
Faceless corpse

WHEN SHE FOUND THEIR FATHER'S NOTE, HATSUMI SENT IT TO THE MEDIA AS A BIT OF MILD REVENGE.
SHE DID IT OUT OF SPITE TOWARD HER SUPERIOR LITTLE SISTER AS WELL AS JEALOUSY OVER HER SUCCESS.
ガコ
KA-CLUNK
HARUKO IS DEAD?

THE CONSEQUENCES OF HER ACTIONS FAR SURPASSED ANY OF HATSUMI'S EXPECTATIONS.
THAT FACT,
ALONG WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUICIDE IN HER SISTER'S DEATH, WERE FAR MORE EXTREME THAN ANYTHING HATSUMI HAD EVER INTENDED.
ぶる TREMBLE
ぶる TREMBLE
...IT CAN'T BE TRUE.

BA-
DUMP
CLATTER
HARUKO WOULDN'T DIE THAT EASILY!
ARE YOU SURE THERE'S NO CHANCE SOMEBODY KILLED HER?!
GASP
"SOMEBODY"...?

THAT'S WHEN SHE SUSPECTED.
THIS BODY... BELONGS TO SOMEBODY ELSE...
ZH
ZH
...
OOHH
EEK!
CLATTER


ズォォォォ
ZWOOOHH
ZH ズ ZH ズ
ZH ズ ズ ZH
HUFF
HUFF
がぁ
ZSHHH
あぁ
HATSUMI.

B-DMP
HUFF
HUFF
B-DMP
AA
AAHH...
HATSUMI SUSPECTED THAT KARIN HAD FAKED HER OWN DEATH, TO TAKE HER REVENGE.
THINKING ABOUT IT REALISTICALLY, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR TOO DIFFICULT TO SWITCH VICTIMS.
AND I DOUBT THAT KARIN NANASE HAD THE TIME TO FIND SOMEONE WHOSE PHYSIQUE RESEMBLED HERS.
SWITCHING OUT THE CLOTHES AND THE PRINTS WOULDN'T BE EASY, EITHER.

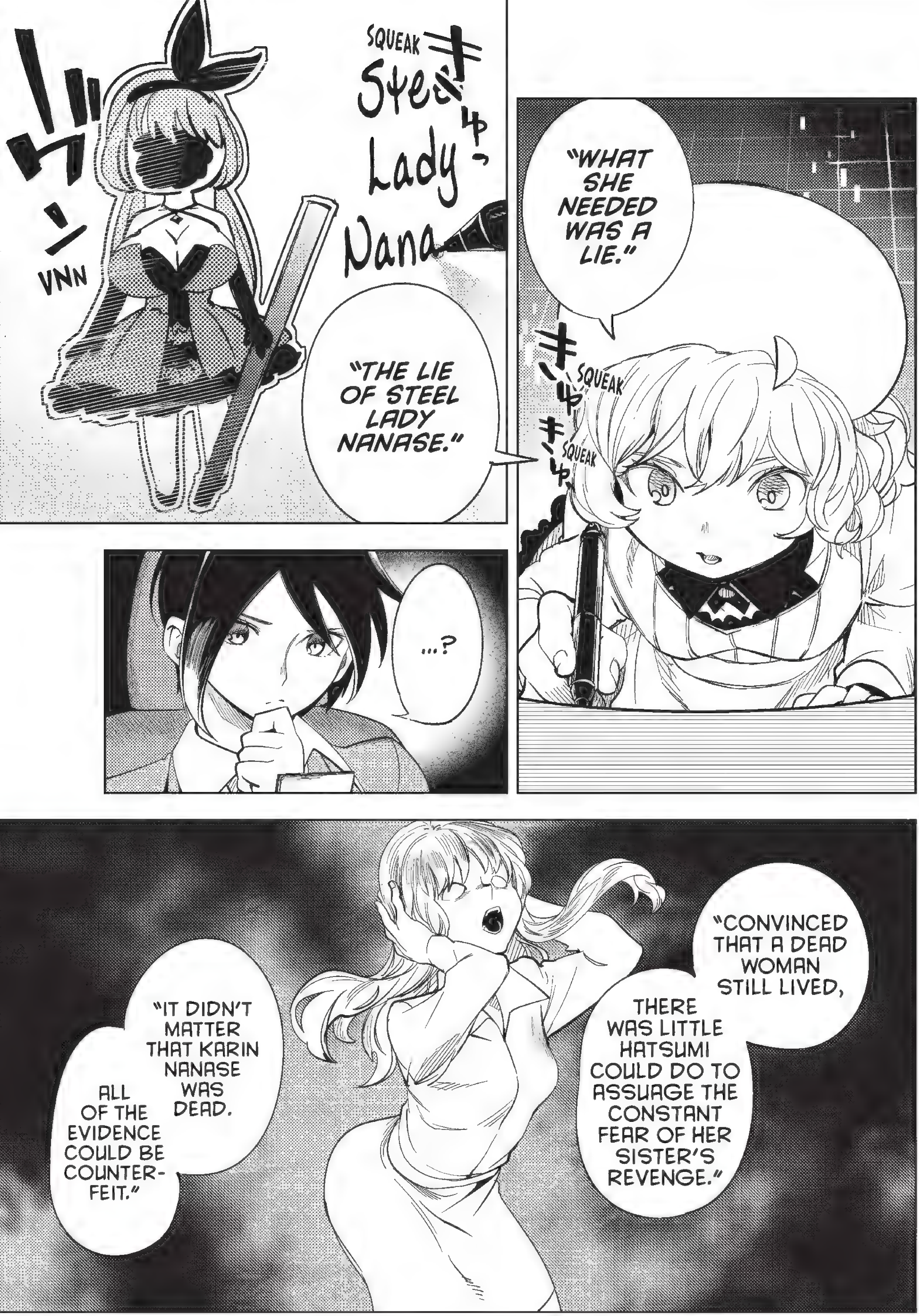
BUT IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE.
FROM HER OLDER SISTER'S PERSPECTIVE,
KARIN NANASE WAS PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF SUCH A THING.
EVEN IF SHE DIDN'T INTEND TO DRIVE HER SISTER TO HER DEATH,
HER ACTIONS HAD SET THOSE GEARS IN MOTION. HER GUILT MAY HAVE STIRRED UP HER IMAGINATION.
IN REALITY, KARIN NANASE PROBABLY LOVED HER FATHER AND SISTER.
SHE WAS JUST SMARTER AND MORE STRONG-WILLED THAN MOST, AND HAD A LUST FOR SUCCESS.

BUT IN HER SISTER'S EYES, SHE WASN'T SUCH AN ADMIRABLE HUMAN BEING.
IT WAS EASY FOR HATSUMI TO IMAGINE THAT IF KARIN KNEW WHO HAD BEEN HER UNDOING,
SHE WOULD SURMOUNT ALL DIFFICULTIES TO AVENGE HERSELF.
SHE'S GOING TO KILL ME, JUST LIKE SHE DID HER.
AND IF I KNOW HARUKO, IT WOULD BE THE PERFECT CRIME.
YET TO THE WORLD, THE YOUNGER SISTER WAS DEAD.
ゴゴ
RUMBLE
ゴオオ
RUMBLLLE

ブツッ
SNAP
YOU'RE WRONG!
バッ
BAH
THIS IS ALL WRONG!
ジャラ
RATTLE
ジャラ
RATTLE
ジャラ
RATTLE
HARUKO IS ALIVE!
HNN
HNNGH...
HATSUMI-CHAN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YOU POOR DEAR.
HARUKO-CHAN ISN'T WITH US ANYMORE.
オオオ OOHH
NO, SHE'S ...
I'M SORRY.
I'M... SORRY.
NO ONE WOULD BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A DEAD WOMAN. SHE WOULD BE AN UNSTOPPABLE AVENGER.
HATSUMI WAS AFRAID.
ふわ FWISH
FWIP ばっ
HEE HEE
FWIP ばっ

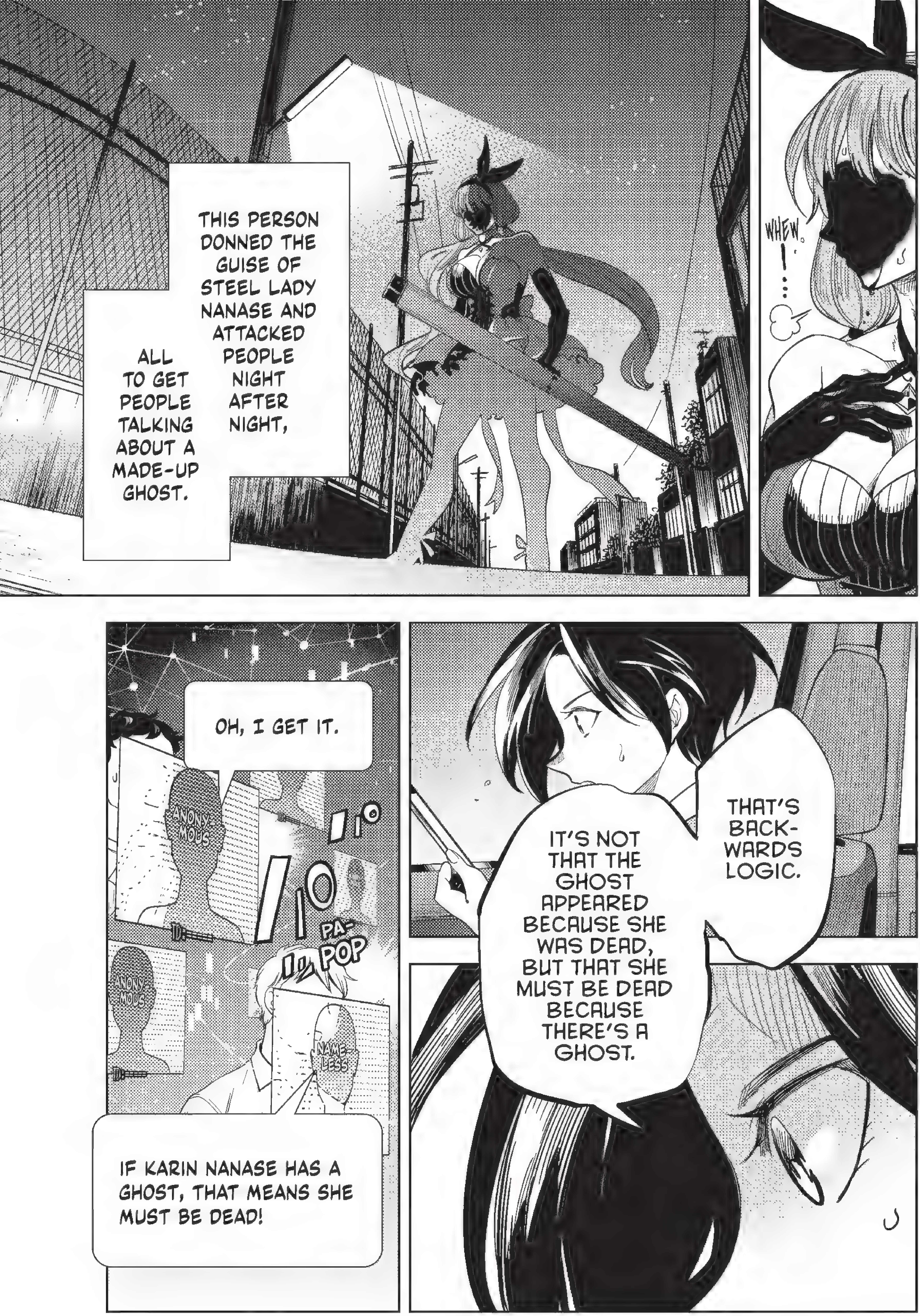
AAAAAAAAAH
AH...
HAUNTED BY THE SHADOW OF HER SISTER, WHO WAS INDEED DEAD,
HER DAILY LIFE BEGAN TO SUFFER.

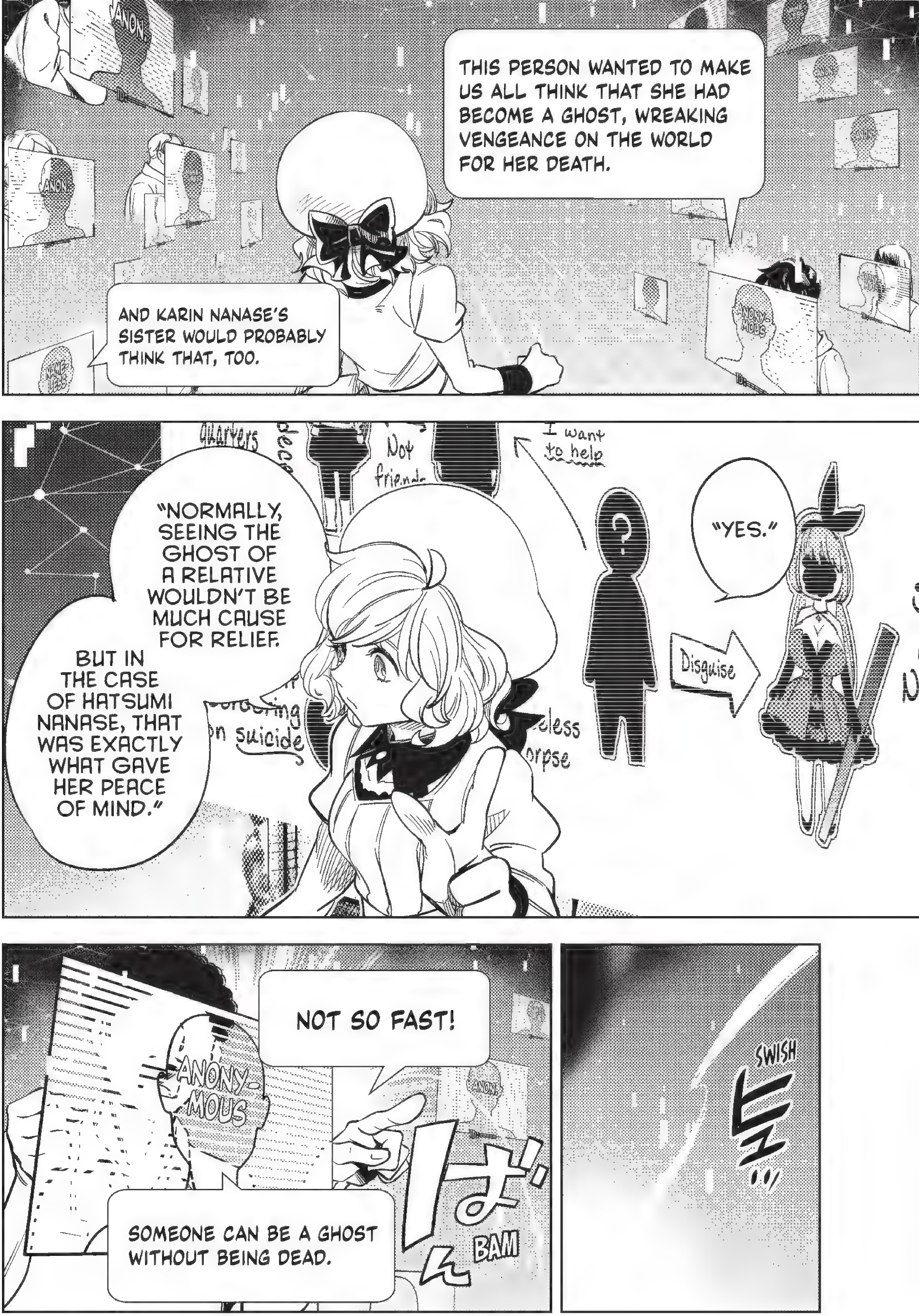

"WHAT SHE NEEDED WAS A LIE."
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
"THE LIE OF STEEL LADY NANASE."
SQUEAK
Steel Lady Nana
VNN
...?
"CONVINCED THAT A DEAD WOMAN STILL LIVED,
THERE WAS LITTLE HATSUMI COULD DO TO ASSUAGE THE CONSTANT FEAR OF HER SISTER'S REVENGE."
"IT DIDN'T MATTER THAT KARIN NANASE WAS DEAD.
ALL OF THE EVIDENCE COULD BE COUNTERFEIT."

“‘IF THE BODY HAS NO FACE, IT COULD HAVE BEEN A DOUBLE. THE REAL KARIN NANASE IS STILL ALIVE.’ WHAT COULD ANYONE DO TO PERSUADE HER OTHERWISE?”
POP
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS
I DON’T KNOW. HOW DO YOU GET RID OF THE SISTER’S ANXIETY?
POP
POP
ANONY-
SEND HER TO THERAPY.
GO ON, TELL US MORE!
ANON.
ANON.
IT’S ALL A LOAD OF CRAP.
KZH ZH
ZSH
NAMELESS
SO THE SISTER WAS PARANOID BECAUSE OF HER OWN SPITE. WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH STEEL LADY NANASE?
SCRITCH
SCRITCH
I want to help
SQUEEEAK
“LET’S SAY THERE’S SOMEONE WHO CARES VERY DEEPLY FOR HATSUMI NANASE AND WANTS TO HELP HER.”
DU-DUN
Sister
Sister
I want to help
?
Doubts
Faceless corpse

HARUKO-CHAN IS DEAD.
IF SHE CAN'T ACCEPT THAT FACT, HATSUMI'S FEAR WILL DESTROY HER.
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO HELP HATSUMI!
KARIN NANASE
Karin Nanase
I JUST HAVE TO PROVE THAT HARUKO-CHAN IS DEAD.
I HAVE TO SHOW PEOPLE KARIN NANASE'S GHOST!

!…
?…
HEY.
WHAT'S THAT?
ZH ズ
ZH ズ
…
UH …?!
NGH …?!
GONG ゴォン
ZH ズ
ZH ズ
ZH ズ
…
TEP タ
TEP タ
TEP タ
TEP タ
AAAAAAAH!
EEEK!
…


THIS PERSON DONNED THE GUISE OF STEEL LADY NANASE AND ATTACKED PEOPLE NIGHT AFTER NIGHT,
ALL TO GET PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT A MADE-UP GHOST.
WHEW.
!...
OH, I GET IT.
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS
PA-POP
IF KARIN NANASE HAS A GHOST, THAT MEANS SHE MUST BE DEAD!
THAT'S BACKWARDS LOGIC.
IT'S NOT THAT THE GHOST APPEARED BECAUSE SHE WAS DEAD, BUT THAT SHE MUST BE DEAD BECAUSE THERE'S A GHOST.


ANON.
THIS PERSON WANTED TO MAKE US ALL THINK THAT SHE HAD BECOME A GHOST, WREAKING VENGEANCE ON THE WORLD FOR HER DEATH.
ANONY-MOUS
ANON.
AND KARIN NANASE'S SISTER WOULD PROBABLY THINK THAT, TOO.
NAME-LESS
I want to help
"YES."
Disguise
?
eless
orpse
Not
friend
quarters
"NORMALLY, SEEING THE GHOST OF A RELATIVE WOULDN'T BE MUCH CAUSE FOR RELIEF.
BUT IN THE CASE OF HATSUMI NANASE, THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT GAVE HER PEACE OF MIND."
bordering
on suicide
SWISH
NOT SO FAST!
ANONY-MOUS
ANON.
SOMEONE CAN BE A GHOST WITHOUT BEING DEAD.
BAM

YEAH! AN ASTRAL BODY!
ANONYMOUS
IT'S POSSIBLE HATSUMI THOUGHT OF THAT, TOO!
AN ASTRAL BODY! YEAH, SHE MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT THAT.
IN A WAY, THAT WOULD BE EVEN SCARIER THAN A GHOST.
...!
FWIP
...! WHAT DO WE DO?!
TKKA TKKA
I PLANNED FOR THIS.
"WHICH IS WHY OUR 'GHOST' MADE SURE IT COULD ONLY BE SEEN AS THE GHOST OF A DEAD WOMAN."
KZH ZH
"STEEL LADY NANASE HAS NO FACE, CARRIES AROUND A STEEL GIRDER..."
ZHRR
"...AND WEARS KARIN NANASE'S STAGE COSTUME."
"ALL OF THESE FACTS ADD UP TO A GHOST WHO WOULD ONLY APPEAR BECAUSE KARIN NANASE HAD DIED IN A SHOWER OF I-BEAMS."

"FURTHERMORE, THIS VERY MEMORABLE NAME AND VISAGE...
...ALSO GOT PEOPLE TALKING, AND SPREAD THE RUMORS THAT MUCH MORE QUICKLY."
Urban Legends
Have you heard of Steel Lady Nanase?
Re: Steel Lady Na
"ATTACKING PEOPLE AT RANDOM SPED THE PROCESS UP EVEN FURTHER."
"FOR THE OPTIMAL EFFECT, OUR 'GHOST' WOULD HAVE WANTED HATSUMI TO COME ACROSS THE RUMORS ON HER OWN."
"INSTEAD OF HAVING A FRIEND OR ACQUAINTANCE SPECIFICALLY BRING IT UP..."
"...SHE NEEDED TO FIND THE RUMOR IN A GOSSIP COLUMN ON THE INTERNET,
OR HAPPEN TO OVERHEAR SOMEONE MENTION IT IN TOWN."
"THAT WAY, THE STORY WOULD SEEM LESS CONTRIVED."

"THE REASON STEEL LADY NANASE'S APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR DON'T MESH WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF KARIN NANASE'S DEATH..."
"...IS THAT SHE WAS CREATED...
...TO MAKE HATSUMI NANASE BELIEVE THAT HER SISTER HAD DIED AND REAPPEARED AS A GHOST."
"IT'S ONLY NATURAL, THEN, THAT WE SEE NO TRACE OF KARIN NANASE'S WILL."
ANON.
I GUESS IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE...
ANONYMOUS
IT TECHNICALLY MAKES SENSE...BUT I DON'T KNOW.
NAMELESS
SOUNDS PLAUSIBLE, BUT NOT REALLY...

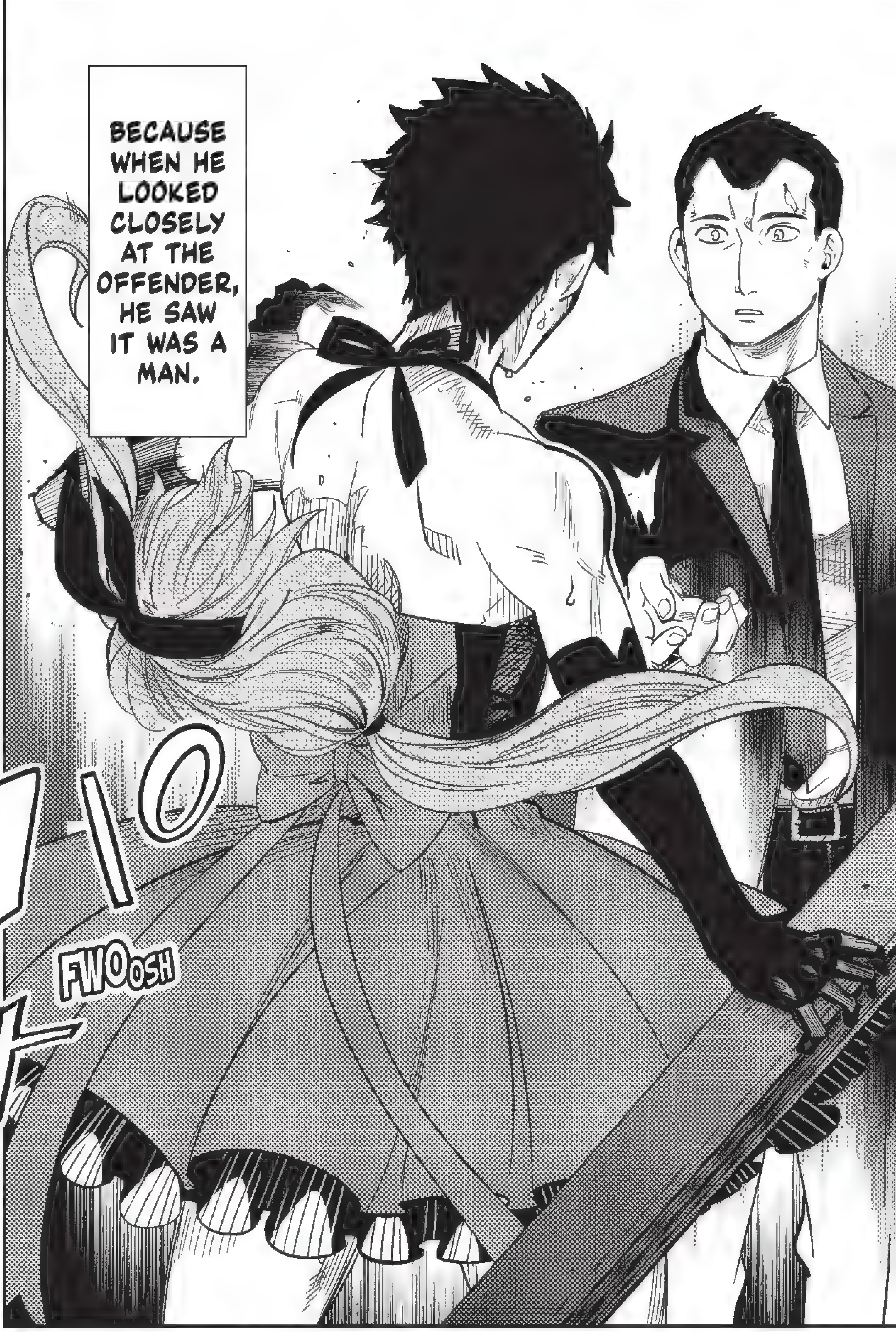
TOMB: NANASE FAMILY TOMB

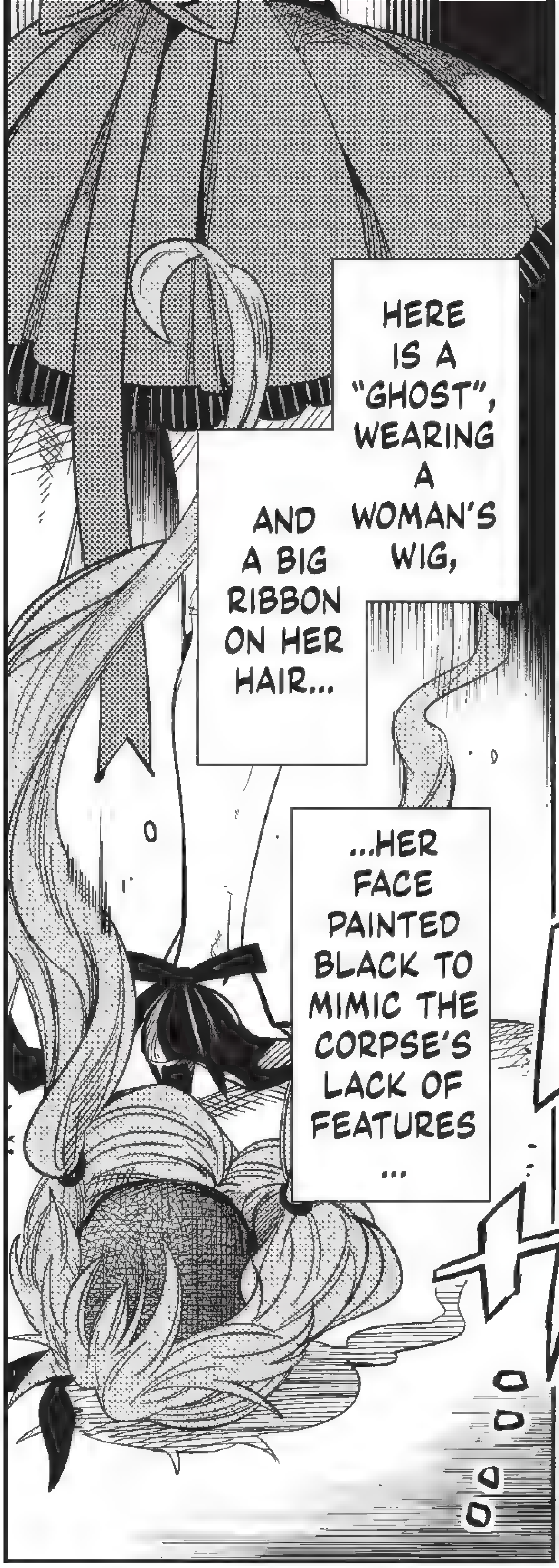
ANONY-MOUS
NAME-LESS
SO WHAT ABOUT KILLING THE DETECTIVE?
POP
ANON.
OH YEAH, I FORGOT ABOUT THAT.
IF STEEL LADY NANASE IS A HOAX, THEN HOW DOES THAT FACTOR IN?
NAME-LESS
AND DON'T TRY TO TELL US STEEL LADY NANASE AND THE COP KILLER ARE UNRELATED.
FSH
"OF COURSE THEY'RE RELATED."
"DETECTIVE TERADA'S KILLER IS THE VERY PERSON WHO CREATED STEEL LADY NANASE."

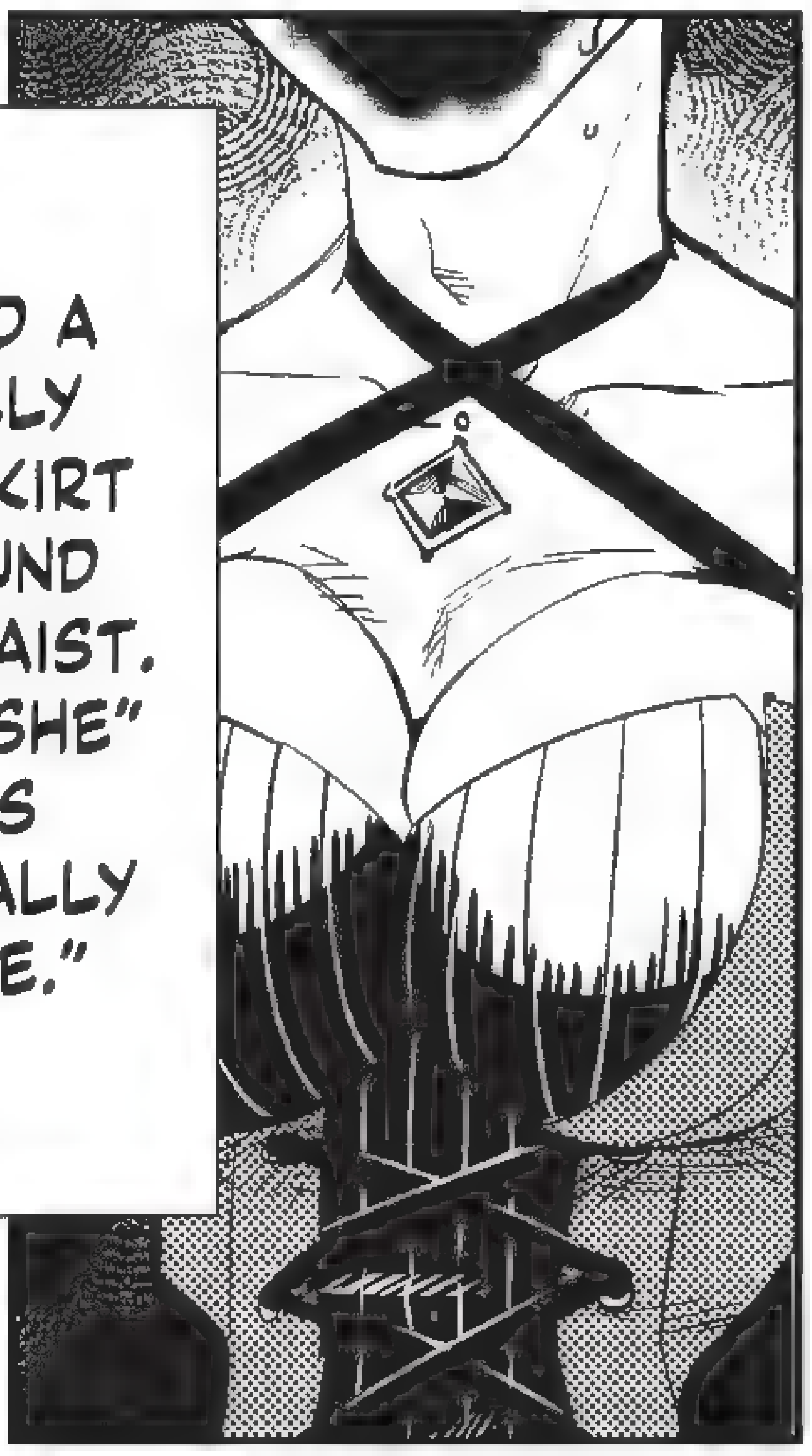
TO SPREAD THE RUMORS AND KEEP THEM GOING STRONG, OUR "GHOST"...
...VISITED MAKURA-ZAKA CITY OFTEN.
IT WAS IMPORTANT TO WEAR THE STEEL LADY NANASE DISGUISE AND ATTACK ALL WITNESSES.
VROOM
ブロロロ
WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT THE CULPRIT WAS DOING LAST NIGHT...
TEP たっ
TEP たっ
たた TEP
たた TEP
...
TEP たっ
ばん
BAM
WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING DRESSED LIKE THAT?
...WHEN, UNFORTUNATELY, DETECTIVE TERADA ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.

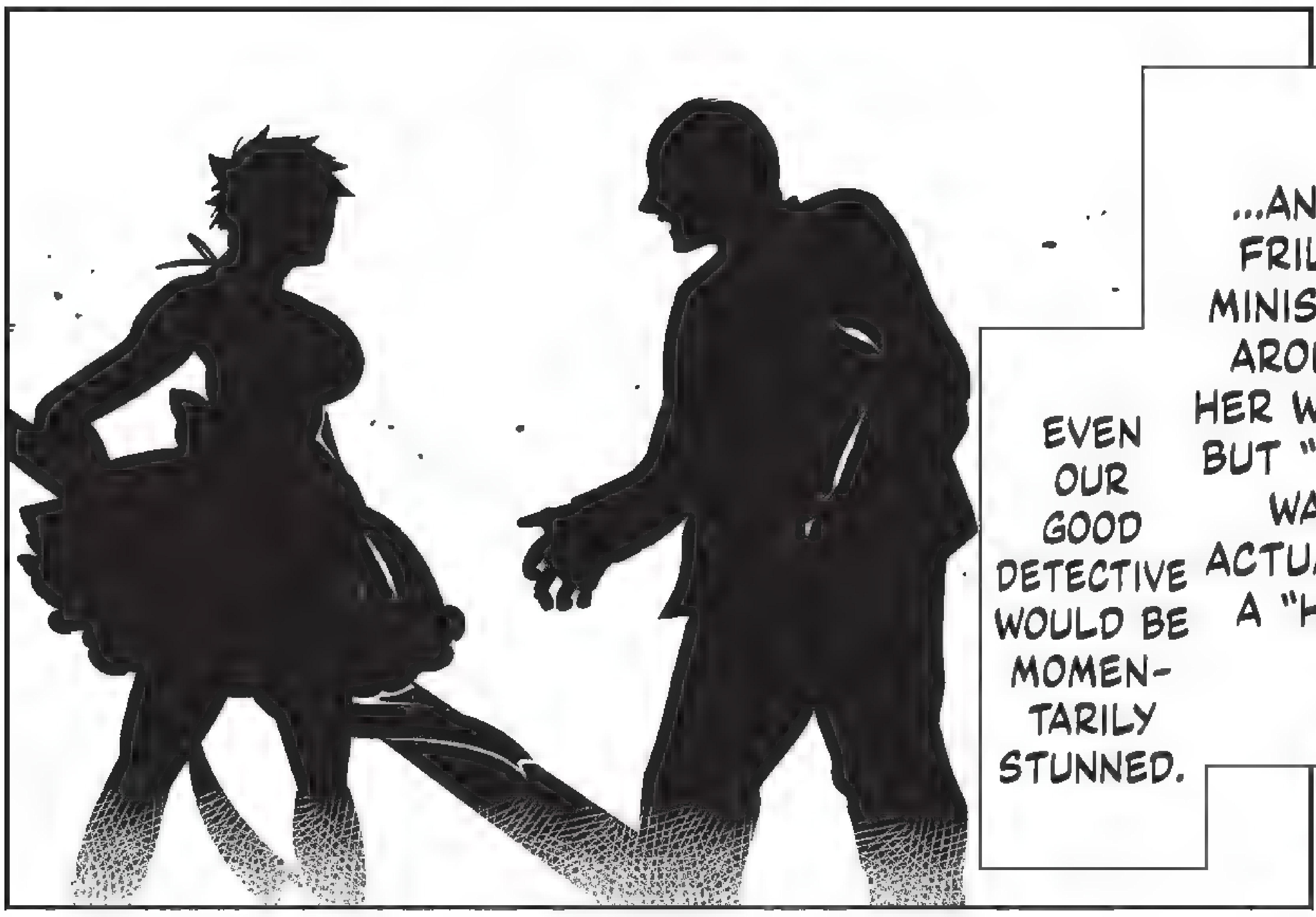
KA-CHAK
YOU MUST BE THAT STEEL LADY NANASE WHO'S BEEN ATTACKING PEOPLE AND CAUSING A RUCKUS!
WINCE
MOST PEOPLE WOULD RUN WHEN CONFRONTED BY SOMEONE IN THAT GETUP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
Police Department Chief Detective
Terada, Tokunosuke
THE PERPETRATOR NEVER EVEN DREAMED THE BURLY DETECTIVE WOULD ACTUALLY INVESTIGATE THE INCIDENTS AND COME IN FOR AN ARREST.
WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH ME TO THE STATION?
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
THE "GHOST" WAS CAUGHT ALL TOO EASILY.

WHEN YOU EXPECT SOMEONE TO RUN AWAY, BUT THEY RUN TOWARD YOU INSTEAD, IT WOULD CONFUSE YOU. ANYONE WOULD FREEZE UP FOR A SECOND.
AND WHEN THE CULPRIT FINALLY THOUGHT TO RUN AWAY, IT WAS TOO LATE. THE DETECTIVE HAD HIS SPOOK BY THE ARM.
BUT THEN, IT WAS DETECTIVE TERADA'S TURN TO FREEZE.
ZLRR
ずる……


BECAUSE WHEN HE LOOKED CLOSELY AT THE OFFENDER, HE SAW IT WAS A MAN.
FWOOSH


HERE IS A "GHOST", WEARING A WOMAN'S WIG,
AND A BIG RIBBON ON HER HAIR...
...HER FACE PAINTED BLACK TO MIMIC THE CORPSE'S LACK OF FEATURES...


...AND A FRILLY MINISKIRT AROUND HER WAIST. BUT "SHE" WAS ACTUALLY A "HE."


EVEN OUR GOOD DETECTIVE WOULD BE MOMENTARILY STUNNED.

her face painted black to mimic the corpse's lack of features, and a frilly miniskirt around her waist. But "she" was actually a "he." Even our good detective would be momentarily stunned.

<574> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 23:55 ID:hawztrmr
Freaky.

<575> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 23:55 ID:89y
A dude in that getup?!

<576> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 23:56 ID:huib 9
Now that you mention it, I hadn't thought of the gender.

ジジ
KZH
ZH
パパ
PA-
POP
ちら
GLANCE
THE PERPETRATOR DID IT ALL FOR KARIN NANASE'S SISTER.
SO IT'S MORE CONVINCING TO MAKE HIM A MAN MOTIVATED BY ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR HER, OR SOMETHING SIMILAR... IS THAT IT?
カタタ
TKKA
TAK
タン
CLICK
NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE THAT A WOMAN WOULD DO SOMETHING SO STUPID,
DRESSING UP AS A GHOST AND SWINGING AN IRON GIRDER AROUND EVERY NIGHT FOR THE SAKE OF SOMEONE ELSE.
THE KILLER TOOK HIS CHANCE—HE SWUNG HIS COUNTERFEIT GIRDER AT DETECTIVE TERADA'S FACE.

ALTHOUGH IT WAS A FAKE, IT HAD TO BE MADE WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF WEIGHT TO BE AS INTIMIDATING AS A REAL STEEL BEAM.
AND IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE SUSPECT WOULD HAVE MADE IT OUT OF WOOD,
BECAUSE THEN IT COULD BE MADE IN TWO ATTACHABLE PARTS FOR EASIER TRANSPORT.
KAPOW
IF IT'S HEAVY ENOUGH AND LONG ENOUGH, EVEN WOOD CAN SPLIT A PERSON'S SKULL.
DEPENDING ON WHERE IT MAKES CONTACT, IT COULD RENDER A PERSON UNCONSCIOUS, OR EVEN KILL THEM IN ONE BLOW.
AND THE PERP'S ONE HIT WAS RIGHT ON THE MONEY.

THUS, DETECTIVE TERADA WAS DEFEATED WITHOUT ANY SIGN OF A STRUGGLE.
THE KILLER PANICKED.
...STUPID DETECTIVE.
IF I LET HIM LIVE, EVERYONE WILL KNOW THAT STEEL LADY NANASE IS A HOAX.
ふるふる TREMBLE
ふるふる TREMBLE
MY LIE TO HELP HATSUMI WILL BE RUINED.
STEEL LADY NANASE...

...HAS TO BE A REAL GHOST.
THE CULPRIT DECIDED TO KILL DETECTIVE TERADA.
AND, TO MAKE SURE THE GHOST RUMORS SPREAD EVEN FURTHER, HE MADE IT LOOK LIKE SHE DID IT.
THUD
BAM
WHEN HIS WORK WAS FINISHED, THE KILLER ERASED ALL SIGNS HE HAD BEEN THERE AND LEFT THE SCENE.
VROOM

IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF FORCED LOGIC!
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?
I'M TIRED OF THIS.
NO, KEEP GOING.
"THEN, WHO IS THE KILLER?
WE DON'T KNOW HIS NAME, BUT WE'VE NARROWED DOWN THE CRITERIA."
"IT WAS SOMEONE CLOSE TO KARIN NANASE'S SISTER.
SOMEONE WHO HAD ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR HER, OR PERHAPS A NEED TO PROTECT HER.
SOMEONE WHO COULD WANDER AROUND AN UNFAMILIAR CITY, LATE AT NIGHT, DISGUISED AS STEEL LADY NANASE."
"AND A MAN."

ANONYMOUS
DO YOU THINK IT'S THE SISTER'S BOYFRIEND?
ANON.
POP
"THE ODDS OF THAT ARE SLIM."
"IF HER LOVER IS DOING STRANGE THINGS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, DON'T YOU THINK SHE WOULD NOTICE?"
"AND IF HATSUMI IS AFRAID HER SISTER'S OUT TO GET HER, NIGHT IS EXACTLY WHEN SHE WOULD BEG HIM TO STAY WITH HER."
"ERGO, WE SHOULD ASSUME THE KILLER IS SOMEONE WITH FREE TIME, WHO WOULD STOP AT NOTHING TO HELP HER.
SOMEONE WITH SOMEWHAT DEVIANT TENDENCIES, AND SOMEONE WHO IS SINGLE."
"IN WHICH CASE, KARIN NANASE'S SISTER MAY BE IN DANGER."

IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD IF THE KILLER WERE SATISFIED WITH HIS ONE-SIDED FEELINGS FOR HER, AND WAS HAPPY MERELY TO HELP HER FROM AFAR.
BUT NOW HE'S KILLED A MAN.
IF THAT GOT HIS BLOOD BOILING IN THE HOPES OF SOME RECOMPENSE FOR HIS LOVE,
HE MAY TRY FORCING HATSUMI NANASE INTO A RELATIONSHIP.

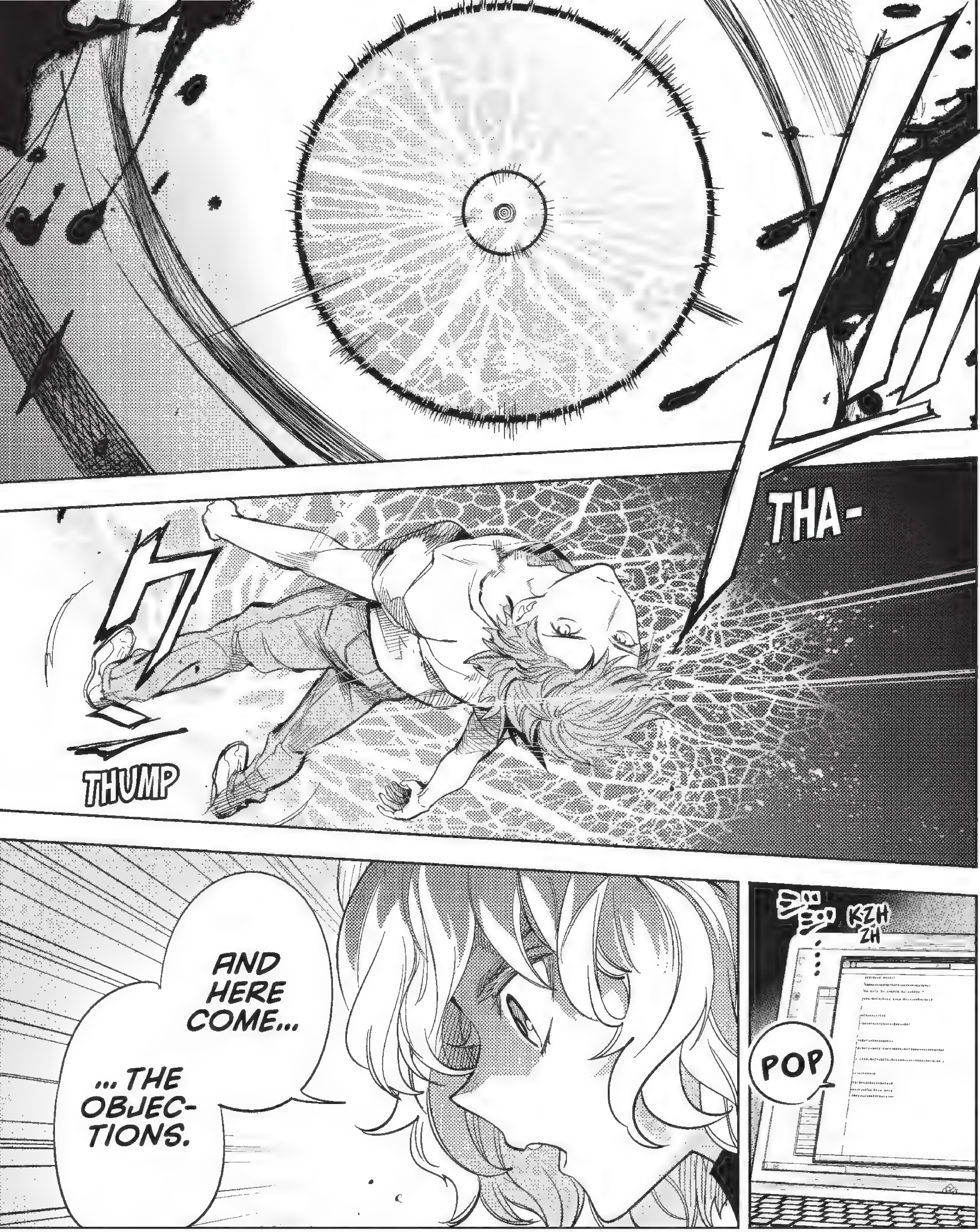
THE KILLER INVENTED STEEL LADY NANASE, A GHOST THAT DOESN'T EXIST...
...ALL FOR THE SAKE OF KARIN NANASE'S SISTER.
AND THIS LED TO HIM MURDERING DETECTIVE TERADA.
IF IT DOESN'T STOP THERE, HE MAY END UP DOING HARM TO HATSUMI NANASE HERSELF.

PANIC
どよ
"STEEL LADY NANASE IS NO SPECTRE."
THEN HE MIGHT HAVE ALREADY MADE CONTACT WITH THE SISTER.
MURMUR
ざわざわ
IT'S BEEN ALMOST A WHOLE DAY SINCE DETECTIVE TERADA WAS KILLED.
MURMUR
"WE MUST IDENTIFY THIS DEGENERATE IMMEDIATELY,
AND ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL THOSE INVOLVED."
THWACK

GRAB
CRACK
WHEW
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I KNOW HOW TO PACE MYSELF.
SOLUTION THREE IS HAVING AN EFFECT.
THEY MIGHT ONLY LIKE IT FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT VALUE, BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE SHOWING UP IN SUPPORT OF IT.
MURMUR
ANON.
IF THEY WERE A MAN, I GUESS THEY'D HAVE THE POWER TO KILL THE DETECTIVE.
BUT IF NO ONE KNEW THEY WERE IN DRAG, THEY WERE PROBABLY ON THE SLIMMER SIDE. COULD SOMEONE LIKE THAT REALLY KILL THE DETECTIVE?
MURMUR
ANON.
THAT'S THE THING. THE KILLER BEING IN DRAG CAUGHT THE DETECTIVE OFF GUARD.
ANONY-MOUS
KARIN'S SISTER WAS HOT TOO, SO IT MAKES SENSE THAT THERE'D BE A GUY WHO GOT ATTACHED TO HER.
NAME-LESS

KAPOW
AND YET, STEEL LADY NANASE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE WEAKENED.
SPLAT
バシャ
SPLASH

CLACK
コッ
CLACK
コッ
DRIP
DRIP
ボト
I KNOW SHE'S A MONSTER, BUT DOES SHE HAVE TO GO *THAT* FAR?!
GURBLE
ごぼ
CLACK
コッ
CLACK
コッ
CLACK
コッ
CLACK
コッ
WHOOM


THA-
THUMP
KZH ZH
POP
AND HERE COME...
...THE OBJECTIONS.

632> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:09
Your solution has a fatal flaw.

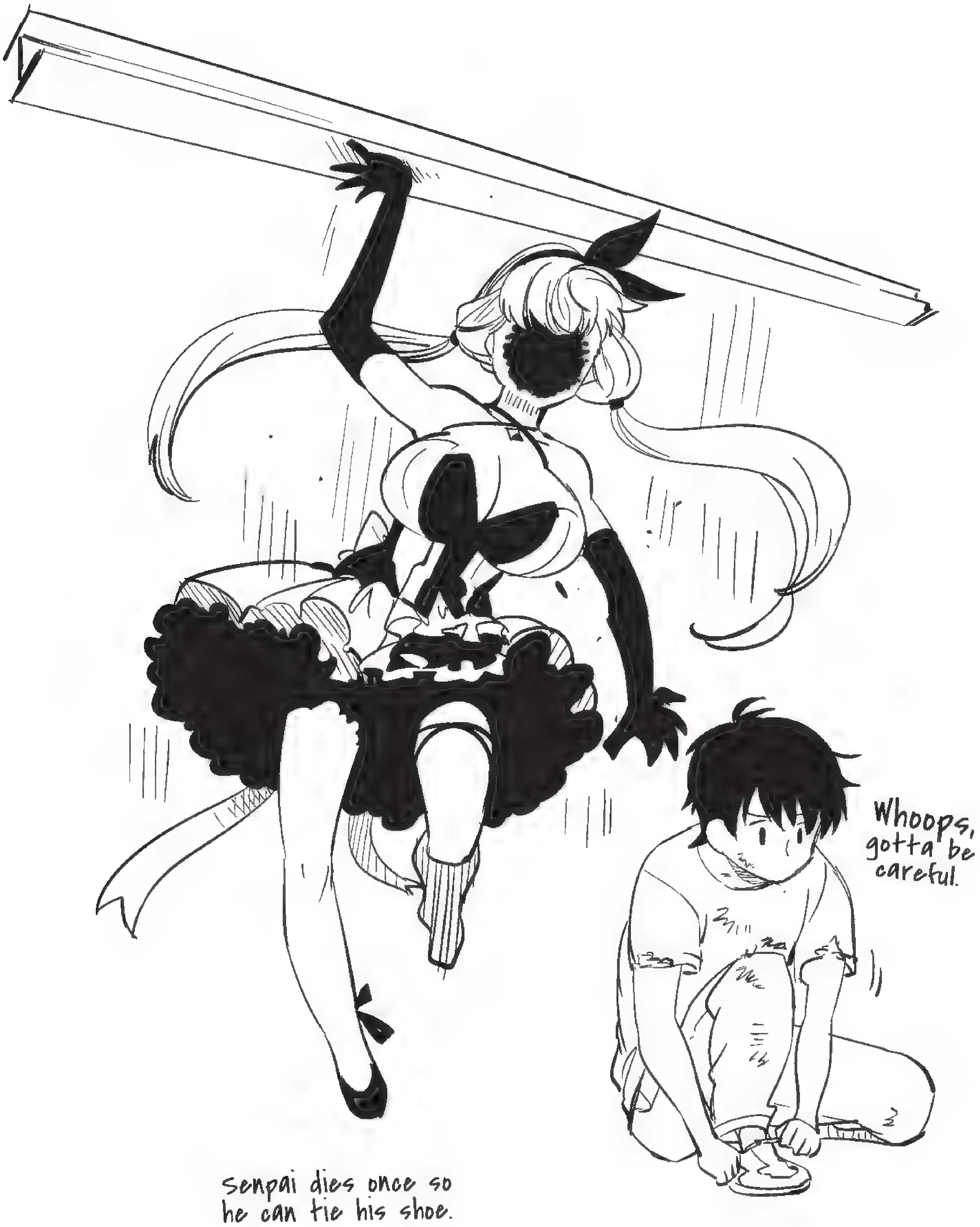
KZH ZH
ZSHH
"YOU CLAIM THAT THE KILLER WANTED TO GIVE KARIN NANASE'S SISTER PEACE OF MIND,
AND THAT'S WHY HE CREATED STEEL LADY NANASE, BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
ANON.
"HATSUMI WAS AFRAID OF HER SISTER'S REVENGE."
"IF HE WAS TRYING TO CALM HER DOWN,
HE WOULD HAVE INVENTED A MORE PEACEFUL GHOST."
ANON.
NAMELESS
ANONYMOUS
"BUT INSTEAD, WE HAVE STEEL LADY NANASE, WHO BRANDISHES A STEEL GIRDER AND ATTACKS PEOPLE WITH IT."
"WOULDN'T SHE THINK THAT, IF HER LIVING SISTER DOESN'T COME FOR HER, HER SISTER'S GHOST WILL?"
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS

"FURTHERMORE, IF THE GHOST HAS KILLED A MAN, HER FEAR WOULD BE ASTRONOMICAL.
HATSUMI WOULD BE THAT MUCH CLOSER TO A MENTAL BREAKDOWN."
OH.
GOOD POINT.
GASP
BUT —
COME ON, CAN'T YOU JUST IGNORE THAT DETAIL?!
SFF す
"ERGO, YOU HAVE FAILED TO ESTABLISH THE KILLER'S MOTIVE."

"IF HIS MOTIVE DOESN'T HOLD UP,
THEN CONSEQUENTLY, YOUR ENTIRE SOLUTION FALLS APART."
KZH ZH

ANON.
ZSH
!
SNAP!
FWOOOOSH
OOOHH
THEY'RE RIGHT.
THAT SOLUTION DOESN'T WORK.
ARE YOU SURE? KILLERS DON'T ALWAYS DO THINGS THAT MAKE SENSE.
HE'S KIND OF CRAZY, AND HE JUMPS TO CONCLUSIONS, REMEMBER?
MAYBE HE JUST THOUGHT ALL HE NEEDED WAS A GHOST AND DIDN'T REALIZE THE ONE HE MADE UP WOULD BACKFIRE.
OOHH
THAT'S POSSIBLE, BUT IF WE GO BY THOSE RULES, THEN ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.
I MEAN, IF THE MURDERER IS THAT IRRATIONAL, THERE'S NO WAY TO DEDUCE ANYTHING.

IN/SPECTRE


Whoops, gotta be careful.

senpai dies once so he can tie his shoe.

FWOOM
KZH ZH
RIKKA-SAN'S GOOD.

CHAPTER 12: “THE ULTIMATE FICTION”

‹1001› Name: Withheld by Request 00:13 ID:Over 1000

This thread has surpassed 1000 posts.

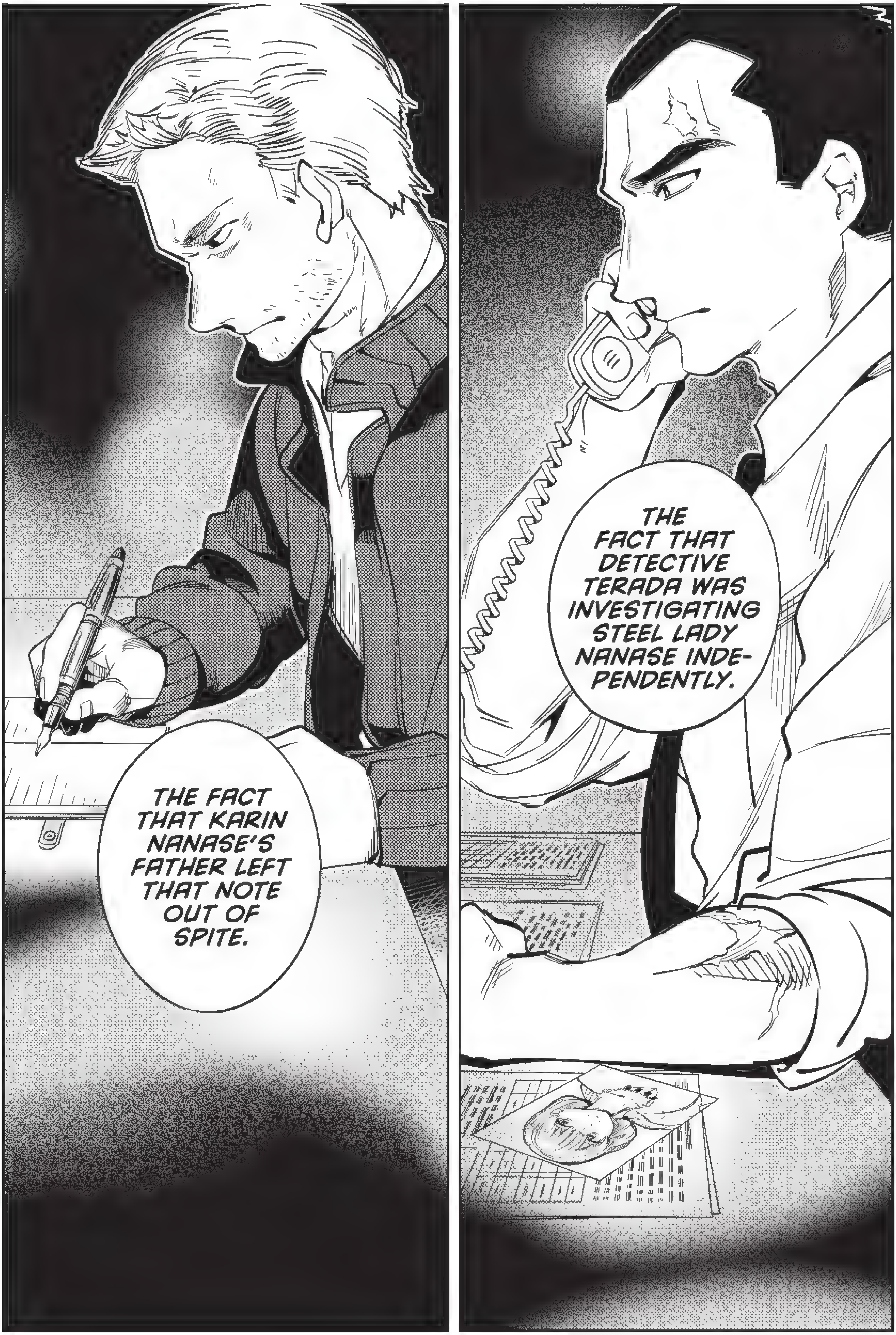
Please go to a new thread.

WORKING ALONE, SHE'S ABLE TO MAKE HER OBJECTION, DIE, AND COME BACK TO LIFE WITH THE FLOW OF THE FUTURE IN HER CLUTCHES.
BUT *WE* ARE NOT ALONE.
KURÔ-SENPAI AND I...

...ARE GOING TO STOP YOU.
RIGHT.
THEY MAY HAVE REJECTED SOLUTION THREE, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT EVERYONE IS ON BOARD.
SURELY SOME PERCENTAGE OF THEM HAVE STOPPED BELIEVING IN STEEL LADY NANASE.
I'M NOT GOING TO DEPEND ON A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF DISSENTERS.

WHAT?
THERE MAY BE SOME PEOPLE WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH THE SOLUTIONS I'VE ALREADY PROVIDED, BUT I HAVEN'T FACTORED THEM INTO MY CALCULATIONS.
ぎし
CREAK
I SUSPECT RIKKA-SAN HAS THE SAME IDEA YOU DO,
AND IS DECIDING HER FUTURE BY SELECTING THE ONES WITH THE SMALLEST NUMBER OF DISSENTERS.
カタタ
TKKA-TAK
タタ
TAK-TAK
SHE ASSUMES THAT I'M TRYING TO WHITTLE AWAY AT HER INFLUENCE IN STAGES.
THAT IS WHAT WILL LEAD HER INTO MY TRAP.

Solution
Yea
A
BUT DIDN'T YOU SAY A LITTLE WHILE AGO THAT YOU ONLY NEED PARTIAL BELIEF?
Yea
D
カタ TKKA
カタ TKKA
I DIDN'T MEAN A PART OF THE PEOPLE ON THE SITE.
"I ONLY NEED THEM TO BELIEVE PART OF THE SOLUTIONS I PRESENT."
THAT'S WHAT I MEANT.
カタタ TKKA-TAK
カタタ TKKA-TAK
HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED?
EACH OF MY SOLUTIONS HAS INCORPORATED SOME OF THE SOLUTION THAT PRECEDED IT.


THE FACT THAT DETECTIVE TERADA WAS INVESTIGATING STEEL LADY NANASE INDEPENDENTLY.
THE FACT THAT KARIN NANASE'S FATHER LEFT THAT NOTE OUT OF SPITE.

THE CONCLUSION OF EACH SOLUTION MAY HAVE BEEN REJECTED,
BUT THE BASIC ELEMENTS THEMSELVES HAVE NOT BEEN.
EVEN WITH OUR NEWLY REJECTED SOLUTION THREE—OUR PORTRAIT OF THE KILLER WAS DISMISSED...
...BUT I ALSO SAID THAT IT WAS KARIN NANASE'S SISTER WHO GAVE THE NOTE TO THE MEDIA.
NO ONE HAS EXPRESSED ANY VIEWS IN OPPOSITION TO THAT.

RIKKA-SAN BELIEVES...
...THAT SHE WILL SUCCEED AS LONG AS THEY REJECT THE CONCLUSION THAT...
..."THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS STEEL LADY NANASE."
SHE DOESN'T SEE THE NEED TO DESTROY MY SOLUTIONS AT THEIR ROOT.
AS LONG AS SHE CAN CRUSH THE CONCLUSION, SHE HAS ACCOMPLISHED HER GOAL.
THE CONCLUSION IS EASIER TO BEAT DOWN BECAUSE IT IS AN ABSOLUTE LIE.
SHE CAN DEAL WITH IT QUICKLY AND EASILY, LOWERING THE NUMBER OF DISSENTERS.

IF SHE TRIES TO KNOCK DOWN EVERY SINGLE ARGUMENT LEADING UP TO THE CONCLUSION, THE FLOW OF THE CHAT WOULD STAGNATE, AND SHE WOULD DRAW TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO HERSELF.
RIKKA-SAN HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE THE SIMPLEST OPTION.
KA-CLICK
Y—
YOU MEAN...!
WHAT RIKKA-SAN IS DOING NOW...
: Withheld by Request 0
solution has a fatal flaw
THE FUTURES SHE'S BEEN CHOOSING...
THEY'RE ALL...
...A PART OF YOUR PLAN?
EVERYTHING IS NOW IN PLACE.
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO LAUNCH MY FINAL ATTACK.

FICTION WILL BE BORN WITHIN THE FICTION, AND INVERT ITSELF INTO TRUTH.

STEEL LADY NANASE WILL DISAPPEAR.

LET US MOVE ON...
...TO SOLUTION NUMBER FOUR.

FWOOM
FWAM
KA
ZH
ZH
TMP

KHEEEN
"NEVERTHELESS, STEEL LADY NANASE IS A FICTION."
"THE THREE SOLUTIONS I PRESENTED PREVIOUSLY WERE MERELY A FOUNDATION, LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE REAL TRUTH."
ANONYMOUS
ANON.
NAMELESS
ANON.
NAMELESS
ANONYMOUS
"SOMEONE IS BEHIND THIS."
NAMELESS
ANON.
ANON.
"SOMEONE WHO CREATED THE GHOST OF STEEL LADY NANASE...
...AND MURDERED DETECTIVE TERADA."
NAMELESS
JUST WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
POP
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS
COME ON, THAT'S ENOUGH.
PA-POP
NAMELESS
GIVE IT A REST.
AND WHO IS THIS "SOMEONE"?
ANON.
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS
STEEL LADY NANASE IS A GHOST.

"THE KILLER IS NONE OTHER..."
"...THAN HARUKO 'KARIN' NANASE."
"SHE ISN'T DEAD."
"SOMEONE DIED AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE THAT NIGHT,
BUT IT WAS A FAKE, SET UP TO LOOK LIKE KARIN NANASE."
"WHEN YOU FIND A BODY WITHOUT A FACE, YOU HAVE TO ASSUME IT COULD HAVE BEEN SWITCHED."

"THE REAL KARIN NANASE IS ALIVE AT THIS VERY MOMENT."
YOU JUST SAID SHE WASN'T.
MODERATOR, GET RID OF THIS TROLL!
NO, THEY NEVER DID PROVE OR DISPROVE THE BODY SWITCHING THEORY.
POP
POP
IF KARIN NANASE IS ALIVE, THEN STEEL LADY NANASE DOESN'T EXIST, RIGHT?
NO WAY, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. THIS ISN'T SOME TV DRAMA.
BECAUSE LIVING PEOPLE DON'T HAVE GHOSTS.
ZSH
WHAT ABOUT AN ASTRAL BODY?
IF SHE WERE ALIVE, SHE WOULDN'T APPEAR IN AN OUTFIT LIKE THAT.
FIRST, SHOULDN'T WE TALK ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE SWITCH?
Z-ZSH
ANON.
ANON.
NAMELESS

SUSPECTED OF KILLING HER FATHER AND OUT OF A JOB, KARIN NANASE WAS HIDING IN MAKURAZAKA CITY.
BOOP
Hatsumi
Call Ended
BOOP
SHE'S A SMART GIRL. SHE PROBABLY FIGURED OUT IT WAS HER FATHER AND SISTER WHO HAD TAKEN HER DOWN.
SHE HAD LOST EVERYTHING— EVEN HER FAMILY. SHE WAS ALL ALONE.

BUT HOWEVER DEEP HER DESPAIR, SUICIDE IS ONE THING SHE WOULD NEVER ATTEMPT.
IF I WAIT LONG ENOUGH, THE RUMORS WILL DIE DOWN.
BUT...I'LL NEVER BE AN IDOL AGAIN.
ポ COO
I'M STILL YOUNG.
I JUST HAVE TO START OVER FROM SCRATCH.
ポポ COO-COO
TMP
SURELY THAT'S WHAT KARIN NANASE TOLD HERSELF.
BUT THEN...
B-DMP

CLAMP
UM!
WHAT?
SORRY FOR JUMPING OUT AT YOU LIKE THIS.
I GUESS I JUST...
SHE HAD HER FATEFUL ENCOUNTER.
I THOUGHT... YOU LOOK SO MUCH LIKE ME.

THEIR FACES MAY HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT, BUT THEIR HAIR LENGTH, PHYSIQUE, AND AGE WERE ALL VERY SIMILAR.
WE'LL CALL HER A-SAN FOR NOW.
...?
THERE'S NO KNOWING WHAT A-SAN'S CIRCUMSTANCES WERE.
MAYBE SHE HAD NO FRIENDS OR RELATIVES.
OR MAYBE SHE WAS SUFFERING FROM A MENTAL ILLNESS.
UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, KARIN NANASE FOUND HER.

AS LONG AS I'M "KARIN NANASE," I'LL NEVER SHAKE THE SUSPICION THAT I KILLED MY FATHER, OR ERASE THE STIGMA OF BEING A FALLEN IDOL.
IF I THROW AWAY THAT PERSONA AND START OVER AS SOMEONE ELSE...
THE TEMPTATION DROVE HER TO HER CRIME.
HEY.
I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
LUSTROUS COLOR
FADE-RESISTANT
KARIN NANASE CLEVERLY LURED A-SAN INTO HER HOTEL ROOM.

SHE MADE SURE A-SAN'S FINGERPRINTS FOUND THEIR WAY ONTO HER BELONGINGS.
SHE HAD WIPED HER PRINTS FROM THE ROOM AHEAD OF TIME...
...TO ENSURE THAT A-SAN'S WOULD BE THE ONLY ONES FOUND.

A-SAN MOST LIKELY HAD SOME REASON TO COOPERATE WITH KARIN NANASE.
PERHAPS KARIN NANASE PULLED HER ASIDE AT A TIME WHEN HER OWN TROUBLES HAD HER CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE,
AND SHE BECAME DEPENDENT ON THE EX-IDOL.
ZSHH
IT'S ALSO PLAUSIBLE THAT SHE WENT ALONG WITH IT IN EXCHANGE FOR A PROMISE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

SO I'M SUPPOSED TO MAKE THE MEDIA THINK I'M YOU, AND LURE THEM AWAY.
MUSS もそ
MUSS もそ
ARE YOU SURE THIS WILL WORK, KARIN-CHAN?
THEY MIGHT FIGURE IT OUT TOO FAST FOR IT TO DO ANY GOOD...

IT'LL BE FINE.
THERE, IT'S PERFECT.
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
LOOK.
FSH
SEE THAT SHADOWY PLACE DOWN THERE?
NO ONE FROM THE MEDIA WILL SEE US IN THAT CONSTRUCTION SITE. IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE TO MEET.

WE'LL MEET UP THERE AFTER DARK.
ザアアア
ZSHH
ぱしゃ
SPLISH
ザアアア
SHHH

IF NANASE KARIN HAD NEVER ENCOUNTERED A-SAN, SHE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE LET THE RUMORS RUN THEIR COURSE AND WOULD HAVE LIVED A HAPPY, NORMAL LIFE.
BUT IN THE DEPTHS OF HER DESPAIR...
...SHE CAME ACROSS A DRAMATIC WAY TO RESTART HER LIFE.
WHACK

SPLAT.
ザァ
ZSHH
...NN...
ぐ
NGH
HUFF
HUFF
ぱっ
FWIP
バシャ
SPLASH
バシャ
SPLASH

ZH
WHAM
RUMBLE
ゴゴ…
CLATTER
ガラ
BOOM
ドォ
CLATTER
ガラ

ZSHH
ザァ…
ZSHH
ザーッ
THE STEEL GIRDERS CRUSHED HER FACE BEYOND RECOGNITION.
NOW IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY HER BY HER FACIAL FEATURES.
"AND ANY SIGN OF THE BLOW THAT RENDERED HER UNCONSCIOUS WOULD BE INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM HER OTHER INJURIES."
CLACK
ZHRR
ズリ
ZHRR
ズリ
ズリ
"THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD ALSO EXPLAIN A CERTAIN OTHER MYSTERY."

"WHY DIDN'T KARIN NANASE TRY TO DODGE THE BEAMS THAT WERE COMING DIRECTLY FOR HER FACE?"
TMP
"BECAUSE THE BODY WAS NOT HERS."
"IT BELONGED TO SOMEONE ELSE—SOMEONE WHO TOOK KARIN NANASE'S PLACE, AND WAS ONLY PELTED WITH THE STEEL BEAMS AFTER BEING KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS."
ZH
ZH
ZH

ONCE SHE HAD FALSIFIED THE SCENE, KARIN NANASE LEFT.
CITY HALL
HERE'S YOUR LICENSE BACK.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
Change of Address
THEN SHE USED A-SAN'S IDENTIFICATION AND BEGAN A NEW LIFE, FREE FROM HER PAST.

"SHE WOULD HAVE HAD TO CHANGE HER APPEARANCE TO MAKE SURE NO ONE RECOGNIZED HER, BUT THAT WOULD BE RELATIVELY SIMPLE."
"A GUTSY GIRL LIKE HER COULD PULL IT OFF."
TMP
"IF IT WAS KARIN NANASE WHO DIED, THEN THERE'S A CERTAIN ELEMENT...
...THAT WE'D BE AT PAINS TO EXPLAIN."
POP ぱっ
WILD SPECULATION!
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS
POP ぱ
YOU STILL HAVE NO PROOF THAT THE VICTIM WAS A DOUBLE.

"THE CIGARETTES."
"THE PREVAILING THEORY IS THAT, THAT NIGHT, KARIN NANASE WENT..."
...TO THE RAINY CONSTRUCTION SITE SO SHE COULD SMOKE AWAY FROM PRYING EYES."
"SHE WAS A MINOR, AND THE HOTEL WAS NON-SMOKING.
IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE SHE COULD SMOKE IN PRIVATE."
POLI
"THERE WERE CIGARETTE BUTTS AT THE SCENE, AND A BOX OF CIGARETTES AND A LIGHTER WERE FOUND AMONG THE VICTIM'S BELONGINGS."
"CIGARETTE BOXES WERE DISCOVERED IN HER HOTEL ROOM, AS WELL."

"THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A PROBLEM HERE, BUT IN FACT THERE IS."
ANON
パチッ
CLICK
...WELL, NOT NECESSARILY.
BUT I'LL SAY THERE IS.
"SIMPLY PUT, IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ASSUME THAT KARIN NANASE WAS IN THE HABIT OF SMOKING."
"SHE WAS A MINOR, AND HAD DEBUTED AS AN IDOL WHILE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL."
Temptation
Scandal
SCOOP
"SURELY SHE WAS WELL AWARE THAT SMOKING WOULD BLEMISH HER POP STAR IMAGE."
"EVEN IF SHE HAD BEEN A SMOKER PREVIOUSLY, A SMART GIRL LIKE HER WOULD HAVE QUIT RIGHT AWAY."

MAYBE SHE STARTED SMOKING FROM THE STRESS OF BEING ON THE RUN FROM MURDER ACCUSATIONS.
OR MAYBE SHE WAS A SMOKER BEFORE, STOPPED FOR A WHILE, AND TOOK IT UP AGAIN?
ANONY-MOUS
POP
"EVEN IF THAT WERE THE CASE, THAT WOULD BE TOO CONVOLUTED."
"SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN HOPING FOR THINGS TO BLOW OVER QUICKLY.
IF ANYONE FOUND HER SMOKING, IT WOULD JUST BE MORE FODDER FOR THE MEDIA."
ANON.
ANONY-MOUS
NAME-LESS
"SHE WOULDN'T START SMOKING WHEN THE RISKS WERE SO HIGH."
"THEN WHY WERE THERE CIGARETTES ON THE SCENE?"

"BECAUSE THE CIGARETTES *HAD* TO BE ON THE SCENE."
"BUT IF SHE WASN'T A SMOKER, WHY WOULD THE CIGARETTES HAVE TO BE THERE?"
"TO COMPLETE THE SWITCH."
"TRUE, THE CIGARETTES SERVED AS A REASON FOR KARIN NANASE TO BE ALONE AT A CONSTRUCTION SITE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
BUT THAT IS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE."

"SHE COULD MAKE UP ANY NUMBER OF REASONS TO BE IN SUCH A PLACE.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DANGEROUS TO ADD AN ELEMENT LIKE CIGARETTES, WHICH WEREN'T A PART OF KARIN NANASE'S PUBLIC PERSONA."
"YET SHE DID IT ANYWAY."
"BECAUSE HER REPLACEMENT—A-SAN—WAS A SMOKER."
"KARIN NANASE WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE AUTOPSY.
WHEN THE CORONER LOOKED AT HER LUNGS, THEY WOULD FIND EVIDENCE OF SMOKING."

"NO ONE WOULD TESTIFY THAT THE POP STAR HAD EVER BEEN A SMOKER.
IF THE BODY HAD BLACKENED LUNGS, PEOPLE WOULD SUSPECT SOMETHING."
"TO NULLIFY THOSE SUSPICIONS,
SHE NEEDED TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE KARIN NANASE HAD BEEN A SMOKER."
ANONYMOUS
"THE CIGARETTES SIMULTANEOUSLY GAVE A REASON FOR KARIN NANASE TO BE AT THE SITE,
AND ERASED ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT TOBACCO IN THE LUNGS."

"THE BODY THAT WAS DISCOVERED AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE IN MAKURAZAKA THIS YEAR ON JANUARY 30TH DID NOT BELONG TO KARIN NANASE."
"SHE TRICKED US ALL WITH A FACELESS CORPSE.
KARIN NANASE IS ALIVE."
"THERE COULD NEVER BE ANY SUCH GHOST AS STEEL LADY NANASE."

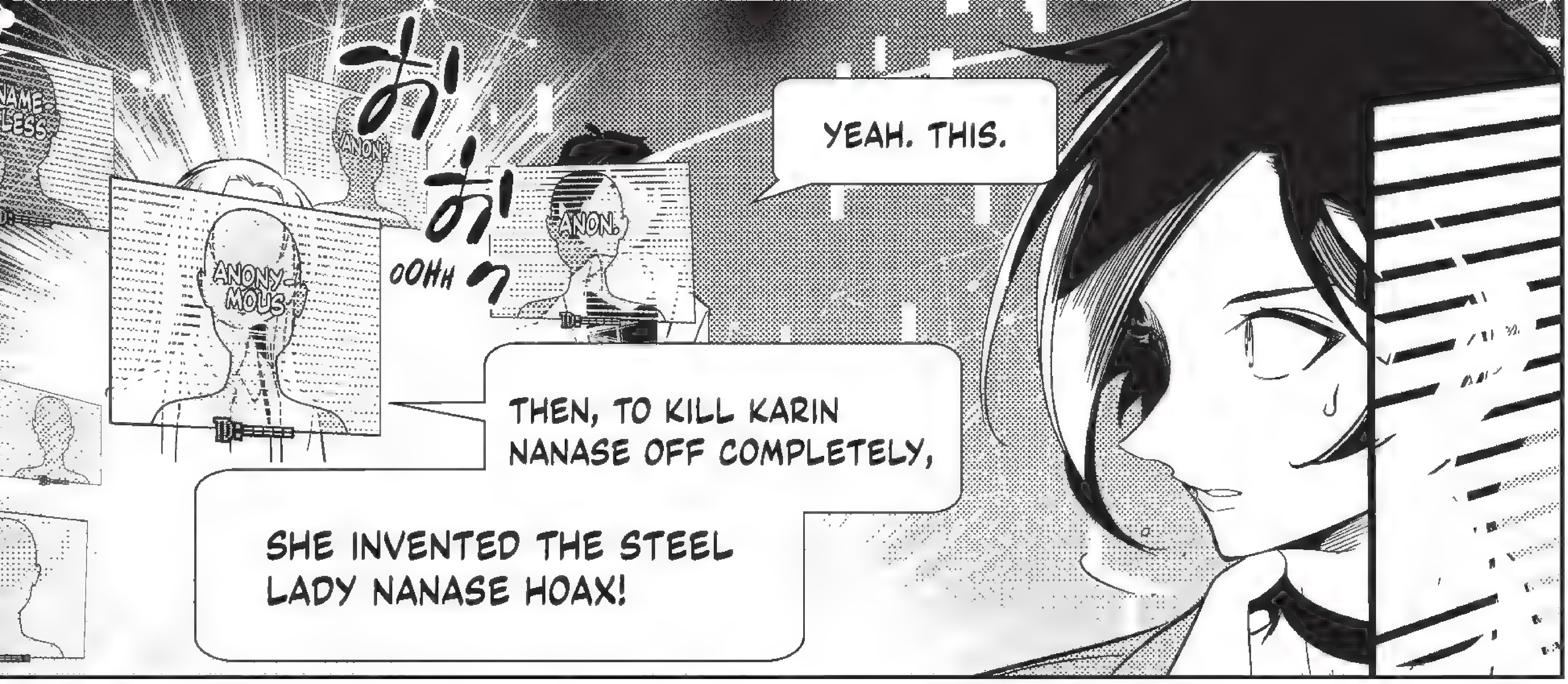
<32> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:
No. No way!
TAK-TAK
<33> Name: Withheld by Request 09/0
Well, it's not impossible.
34> Name: Withheld by Request 09/0 5
What about the cigarettes?
35> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:15 I
Who cares if she smokes?
6> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:15 ID
A-san? Way too convenient.
Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:16 ID:
But if the body isn't Karin Nanase
Name: Withheld by Request 16 ID:t
No, it IS Nanase's body
TAK
Name: Withheld by Request 00:16 ID:ink
TAK
It was totally switched with person.
TAK
It's a faceless corpse, guys.
POP
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS
THEN WHAT ABOUT STEEL LADY NANASE?
KARIN NANASE MADE HER UP, OF COURSE.
POP
POW
NAMELESS
BUT WHY?
MURMUR
ANON.
IF KARIN NANASE IS ALIVE, THEN WHAT THE HELL IS STEEL LADY NANASE?
NAMELESS
KZH ZH
MAYBE SHE DID IT TO MAKE PEOPLE BELIEVE SHE'S REALLY DEAD?
NAMELESS
KZH ZH
IF THERE'S A GHOST, THAT MEANS KARIN NANASE HAS TO BE DEAD.
THEN EVEN IF PEOPLE RUN INTO KARIN NANASE IN HER NEW LIFE AND SEE A RESEMBLANCE, SHE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYONE CATCHING ON.
ANONYMOUS
ZH

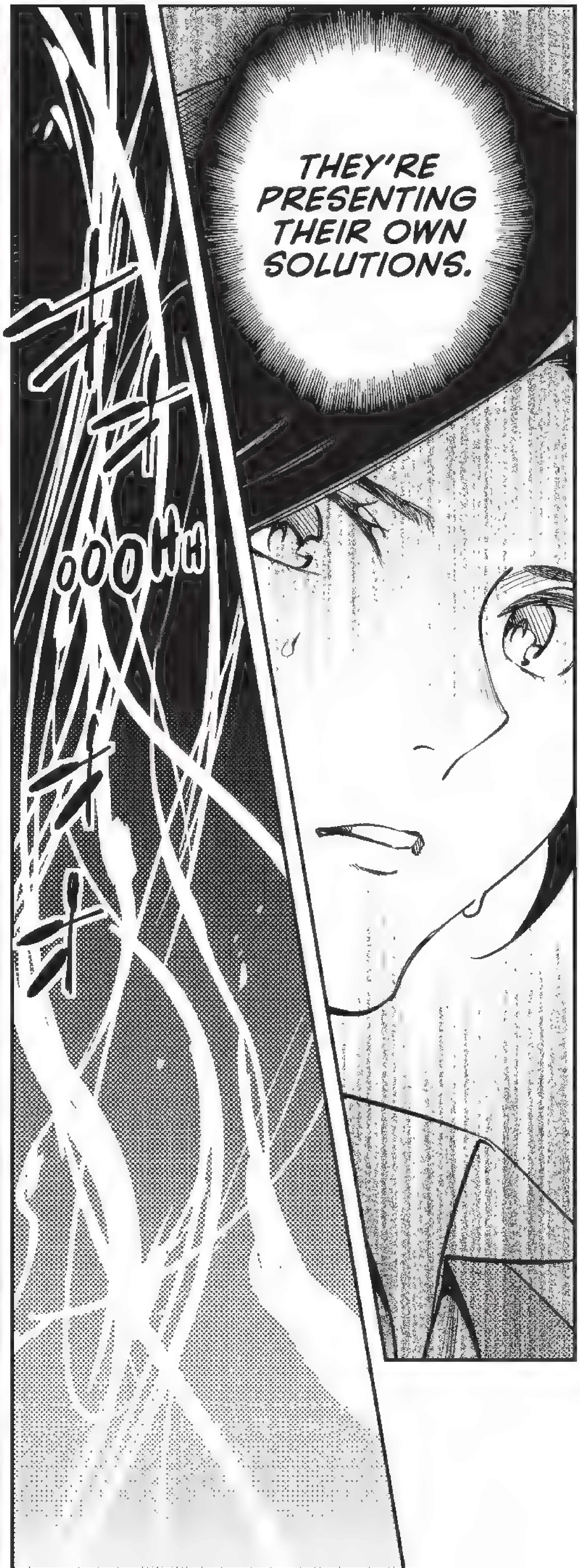
KER
FWAM
WHAM
ゴロゴロ
TUMBLE
TUMBLE
BUT IF THAT'S WHY STEEL LADY NANASE EXISTS, DIDN'T SHE SHOW UP A LITTLE LATE?
WHEN DID THE RUMORS ABOUT NANASE'S GHOST FIRST START?
ABOUT JUNE THIS YEAR.
ALL THROUGH FEBRUARY, EVERYBODY WAS STILL BUZZING ABOUT KARIN NANASE'S DEATH.
BUT AFTER THAT, PEOPLE PRETTY MUCH STOPPED TALKING ABOUT HER.
THIS WIKI WAS SET UP ABOUT MIDWAY THROUGH JULY.
SO EVERYBODY'D ALREADY FORGOTTEN ABOUT KARIN NANASE.
HER STARTING ALL THIS GHOST BUSINESS WOULD JUST BE ASKING FOR TROUBLE.
THERE'S NO WAY KARIN NANASE STARTED THE STEEL LADY NANASE RUMORS.
HER GRAVURE PICS WOULD START GOING AROUND AGAIN.
PEOPLE WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO FIGURE OUT SHE'S ALIVE.
ANON.
ANONYMOUS
NAMELESS
WHAM
THE SITE'S VIEWERS ARE ACTIVELY TRYING TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY.
KA-KRAK

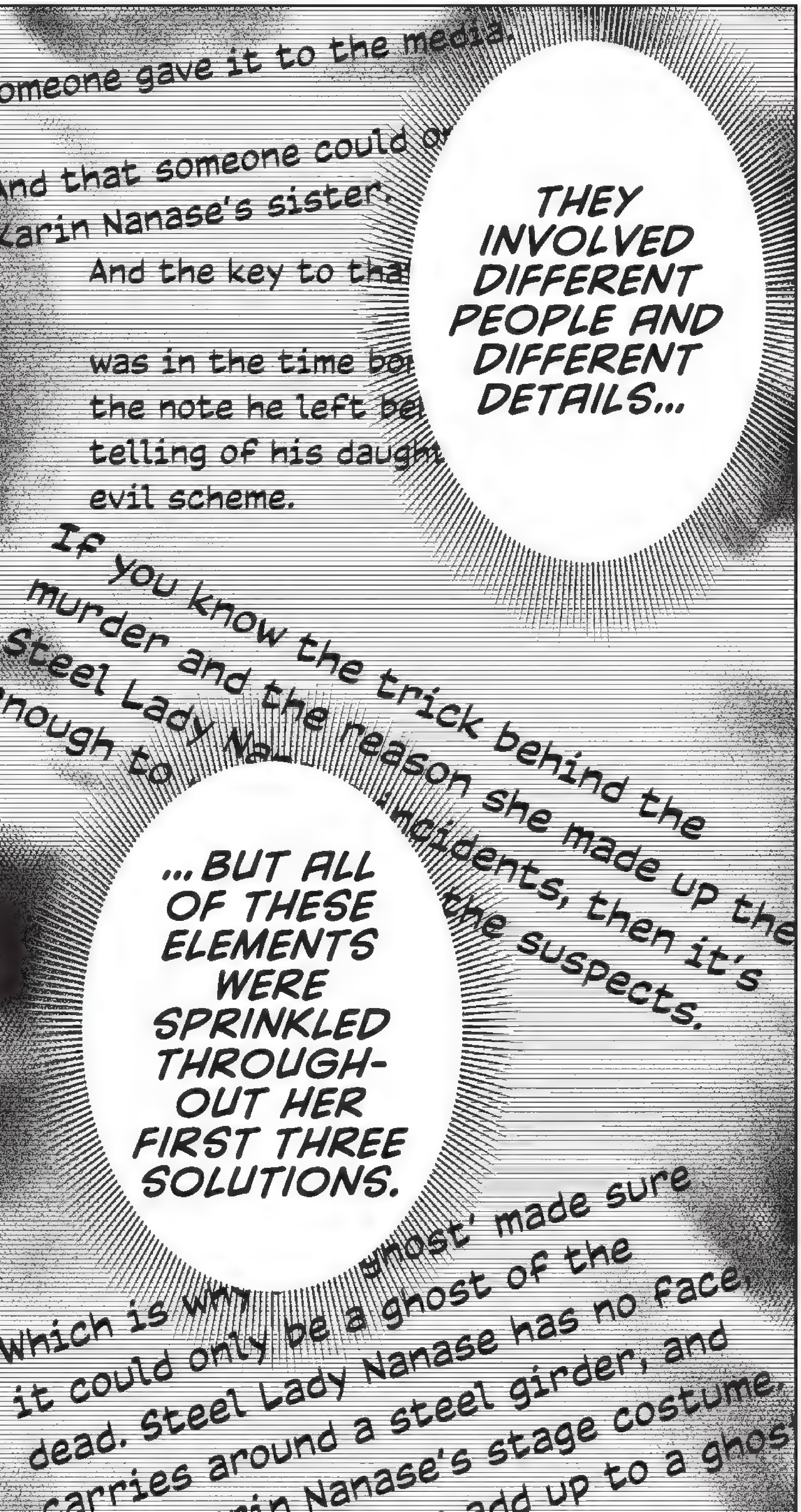
ガラ…
CLATTER
ギ
ギ…
GR-GR
GLOP
どろ…

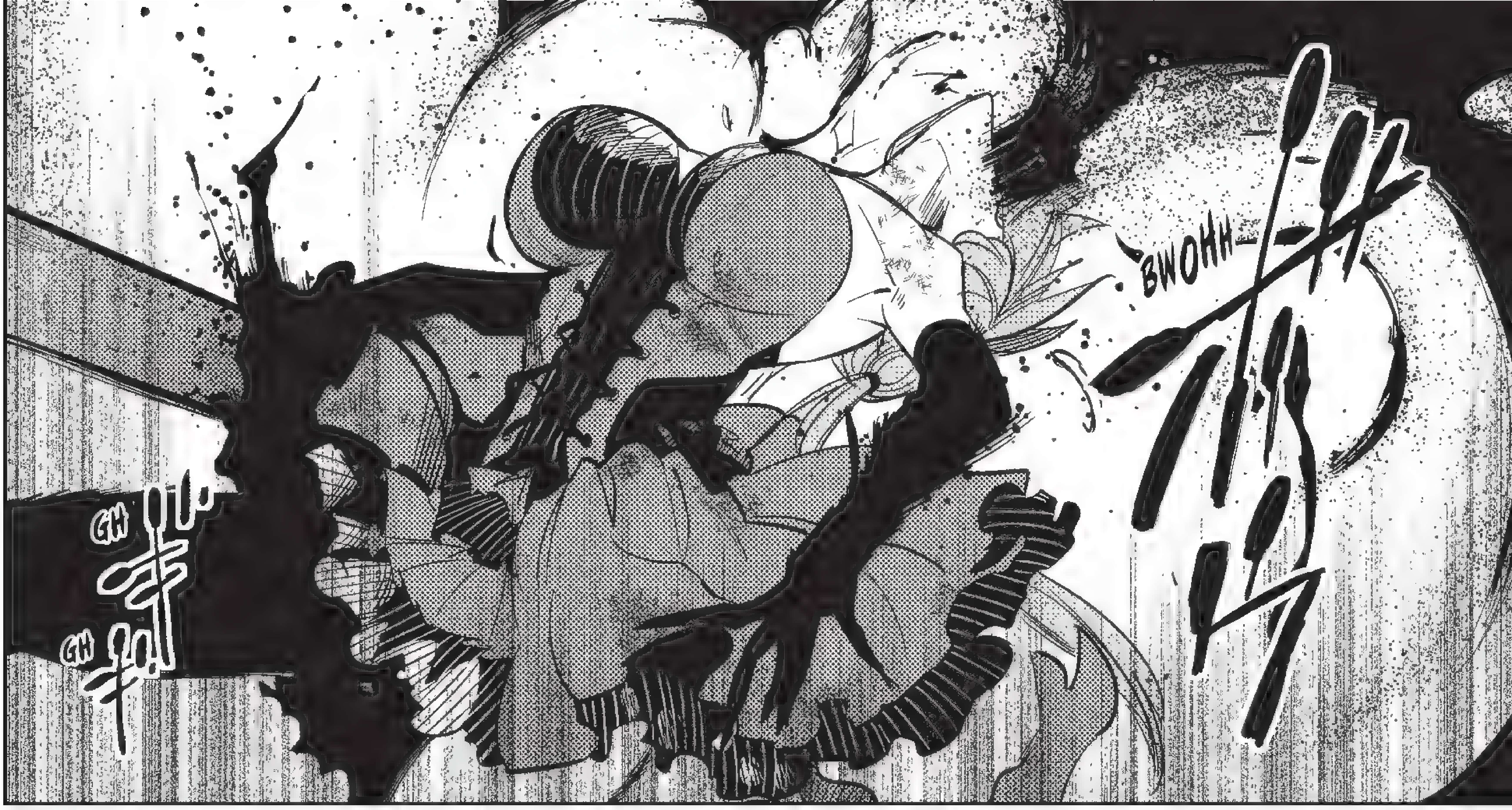
CLATTER
ガタン
SHOONK
ズドッ

WAIT A SECOND. WHAT IF WE LOOK AT IT THIS WAY?
GWOO
KARIN NANASE WAS LIVING IN PEACE UNTIL ABOUT MAY, BUT THEN THE PEOPLE AROUND HER STARTED UP SOME RUMORS, LIKE, "HEY, SHE LOOKS LIKE THAT IDOL."
ANON.
THAT'S POSSIBLE. PLASTIC SURGERY TAKES TIME AND MONEY, AND IT CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH.
WOOO
I BET HER FIGURE AND PERSONALITY ATTRACT ATTENTION ANYWAY, SO IF SHE RAN INTO SOMEBODY WHO KNOWS A LOT ABOUT POP STARS, THEY MIGHT START A RUMOR.
ANON.
ANONY-MOUS
NAME-LESS
GASP
ANONY-MOUS
I GET IT. SO KARIN NANASE WOULD HAVE MOVED AWAY FROM THERE.
BUT IF SHE GOT WORRIED THAT THE SAME THING COULD HAPPEN AGAIN...
OSH

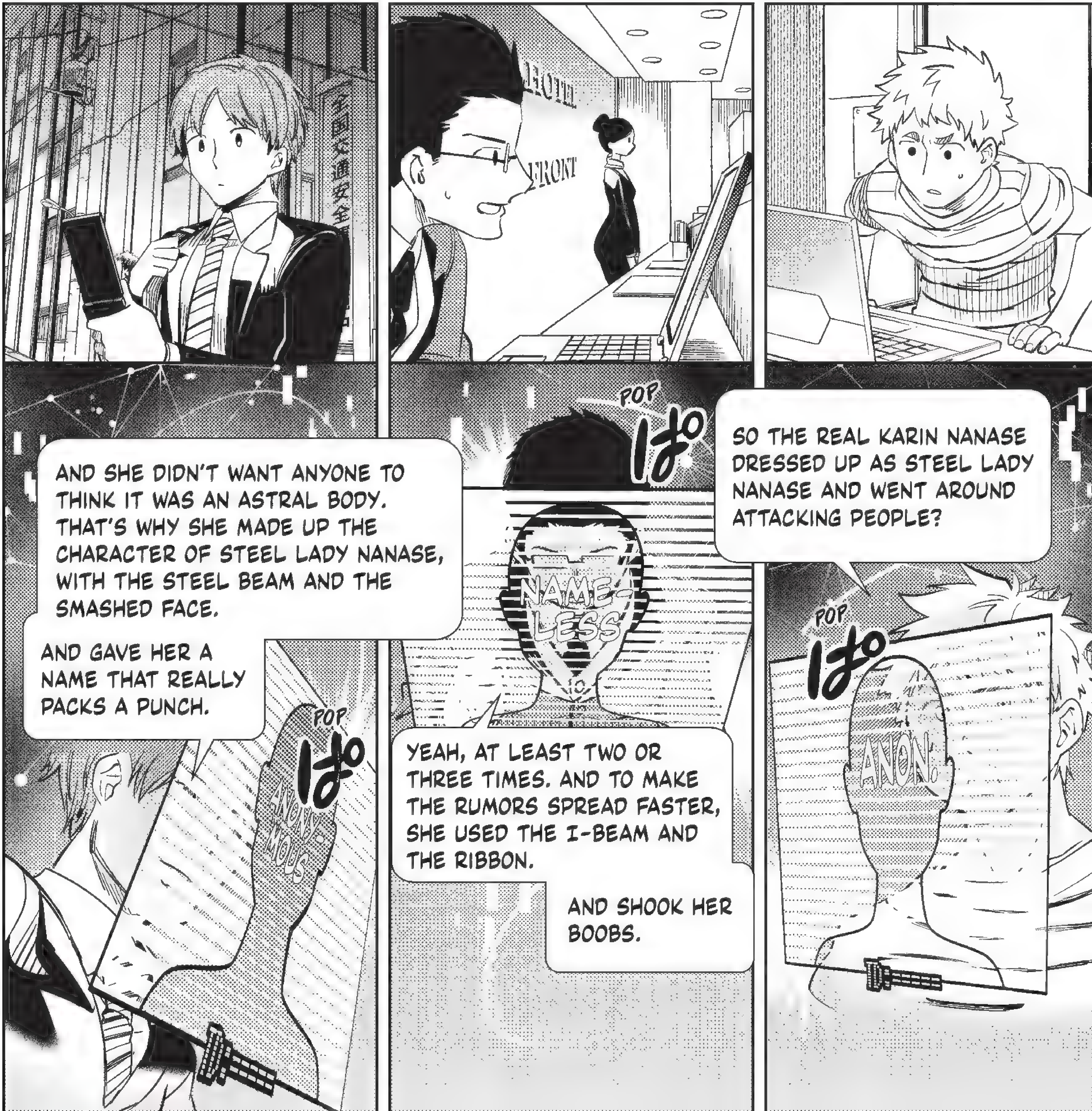

YEAH. THIS.
おぉ
OOHH
NAME-LESS
ANON.
ANON.
ANONY-MOUS
THEN, TO KILL KARIN NANASE OFF COMPLETELY,
SHE INVENTED THE STEEL LADY NANASE HOAX!


THEY'RE PRESENTING THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS.
OOOHH


omeone gave it to the media.
nd that someone could o
Karin Nanase's sister.
And the key to tha
was in the time bo
the note he left be
telling of his daugh
evil scheme.
THEY INVOLVED DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND DIFFERENT DETAILS...
If you know the trick behind the
murder and the reason she made up the
Steel Lady Na incidents, then it's
nough to the suspects.
...BUT ALL OF THESE ELEMENTS WERE SPRINKLED THROUGHOUT HER FIRST THREE SOLUTIONS.
Which is wh ghost' made sure
it could only be a ghost of the
dead. Steel Lady Nanase has no face,
carries around a steel girder, and
rin Nanase's stage costume.
add up to a ghos



SIGN: NATIONAL TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN


HOTEL
FRONT
全国交通安全
SO THE REAL KARIN NANASE DRESSED UP AS STEEL LADY NANASE AND WENT AROUND ATTACKING PEOPLE?
POP
ぱ
ANON.
POP
ぱ
NAME-LESS
YEAH, AT LEAST TWO OR THREE TIMES. AND TO MAKE THE RUMORS SPREAD FASTER, SHE USED THE I-BEAM AND THE RIBBON.
AND SHOOK HER BOOBS.
AND SHE DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO THINK IT WAS AN ASTRAL BODY. THAT'S WHY SHE MADE UP THE CHARACTER OF STEEL LADY NANASE, WITH THE STEEL BEAM AND THE SMASHED FACE.
AND GAVE HER A NAME THAT REALLY PACKS A PUNCH.
POP
ぱ
ANONY-MOUS

THIS LOGIC FOR WHY SHE NEEDED STEEL LADY NANASE...
...IS THE SAME AS IN SOLUTION THREE.
THEY JUST HAVE TO PICK UP THE PIECES FROM THOSE SOLUTIONS AND PUT THEM IN PLACE, AND THEY CAN FIND AN ANSWER.
IWANAGA-SAN TAUGHT THEM HOW MUCH FUN IT IS TO COME UP WITH REASONABLE EXPLANATIONS FOR URBAN LEGENDS.
THAT WAS THE REAL REASON SHE GAVE MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS.

UNTIL NOW, THIS WIKI HARNESSED THE POWER OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF IMAGINATIONS TO GIVE LIFE TO STEEL LADY NANASE.
POST
CLICK
POST
CLICK
POST
CLICK
<368> Name: Withhe
Then Nanase
<369> Name: Withh
No, that's a
<370> Name: Wit
Here she
<371> Name: Wi
That's w
<372> Name: W
Nanase
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
BUT THAT'S CHANGED.
SWAY
HUFF
HUFF
NOW, THE SITE'S VIEWERS ARE ALL EXERCISING THEIR CREATIVITY AROUND THE IDEA THAT THERE IS NO STEEL LADY NANASE.
KRIK
GH
GH
GH
BAM

FWAM
GRG
GWRL
GNN
GNN

SLUMP
ガク
ZHRR
ザザ
WE WON.
ZH ZH
ズズ
GRUK
グ
NOT YET.
I STILL...
...HAVEN'T LAUNCHED MY FINAL ATTACK.

OOOHHH!
RIKKA-SAN.
I WILL NOT LET YOU TAKE HOLD OF THE FUTURE YOU'RE AFTER.
BECAUSE THERE IS AN ORDER TO THIS WORLD, AND IT MUST NOT BE INFRINGED UPON—NOT BY ANYONE.

SHANG
NAME-LESS
"SO THAT THE WORLD WOULD LET HER DIE, KARIN NANASE INVENTED STEEL LADY NANASE.
SHE WANTED THE GHOST TO BE THE FIRST THING PEOPLE IMAGINED WHEN THEY THOUGHT OF HER."
"MAYBE SHE PLOTTED IT ALL BECAUSE SOMEONE POINTED OUT THAT SHE LOOKED LIKE KARIN NANASE."
"THAT'S RIGHT."
とん TMP
"SHE TOOK BOLD MEASURES TO MAKE SURE THAT WHEN SOMEONE NOTICED THE RESEMBLANCE,
SHE COULD STILL AVOID THE SLIM POSSIBILITY...
...THAT THEY WOULD DISCOVER THE BODY SWITCH AND THE TRICK BEHIND THE FACELESS CORPSE."
とん TMP

"KARIN NANASE APPEARED NIGHT AFTER NIGHT IN MAKURA-ZAKA CITY.
AND PLAYED THE PART OF STEEL LADY NANASE."
CLACK
CLACK
"SHE WOULD HAVE DONE A CONVINCING JOB—SHE WAS PLAYING HER OWN GHOST."
"THE RUMORS SPREAD,
THE NAME STARTED TRENDING ON THE INTERNET."
"AND, TO CONVINCE PEOPLE OF THE 'TRUTH' OF HER GHOST STORY,
AND SPREAD THE TALE MORE EFFICIENTLY..."
ANONY-MOUS
ANON.
...
KZH ZH
"...KARIN NANASE DID ONE MORE THING."
ANON.

THAT'S RIGHT.
SHE CREATED THIS WIKI.
FWIP

"KARIN NANASE."
KA-CRACK
"I KNOW THAT YOU STARTED THIS SITE..."
HUH?
KARIN NANASE IS ALIVE?!
KZH
ANONYMOUS
ANON.
KZH ZH
NO WAY!
ZH
NANASE'S THE ADMIN?
NAMELESS
"...AND THAT YOU ARE ITS WEBMASTER.
YOU ARE READING MY POSTS AS WE SPEAK."
KA-KRAK KRAK
PATTER
PATTER

"FROM THE VERY BEGINNING..."
"...I HAVE BEEN WORKING TO EXPOSE YOU."

!!
"THIS SITE HAS BEEN SPREADING AND AMPLIFYING THE RUMORS OF STEEL LADY NANASE AT AN ABNORMAL RATE."
"IT WAS ALL TOO EASY FOR THE SITE TO COLLECT THE INFORMATION."
"OF COURSE IT WAS."
"BECAUSE THE PERSON RUNNING IT..."
"...IS THE CRIMINAL WHO CREATED STEEL LADY NANASE, AND THEREFORE HAD ALL THE FACTS."
ooo
You tried to reject every single solution I presented.

"THAT'S WHY YOU SO STUBBORNLY REBUTTED MY CLAIMS."
EVERYTHING SHE'S MENTIONED...
EVERYTHING ABOUT STEEL LADY NANASE AND ALL FOUR OF HER SOLUTIONS...
"YOU EVEN TRIED TO CENSOR MY POSTS."
THEY WERE ALL LIES.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?!
YOU *KNOW* THE ONE WHO OPENED THIS SITE AND RUNS IT...
"EVERY ONE OF MY SOLUTIONS WAS DESIGNED TO ERASE STEEL LADY NANASE.
BUT YOU COULDN'T HAVE PEOPLE CONCLUDING THAT THE GHOST WAS A FAKE—IT WOULD DESTROY EVERYTHING YOU WORKED FOR."
"AND YOU CAN'T HAVE THE GHOST PASS ON TO THE NEXT LIFE, EITHER. NOT IF YOU WANT TO KEEP THE RUMORS GOING."

...RIKKA-SAN!
TAK TAK
TAK TAK TAK TAK
I SAID FROM THE BEGINNING...
...THAT I WOULD BE LYING.
BAM
POP
NAMELESS
ANON
POP
ANON
POP
ANONYMOUS

ざわ
MURMUR
ANONYMOUS
KARIN-CHAN! CAN YOU READ MY POSTS, TOO?
DID YOU MAKE THIS SITE TO SPREAD THE STEEL LADY NANASE RUMORS?!
IF IT IS KARIN NANASE, IT'S POSSIBLE.
MURMUR
ざわっ
I WAS JUST HERE LOOKING UP URBAN LEGENDS, AND NOW LOOK WHAT I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF...
IN THIS ASSEMBLY, THE TRUTH IS IRRELEVANT.
TO ANYONE WHO BELIEVES THIS LIE, THE VERY SITE THEY'RE LOOKING AT...
...IS THE FRONT LINE OF THE STEEL LADY NANASE CASE.
ANONYMOUS

"NOW ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN WHY AND HOW YOU KILLED DETECTIVE TERADA."
NICE WORK!
PUT IT ALL OUT THERE!
FWOOM
THE PROBLEM OF THE SLAIN DETECTIVE, EH?
IS KARIN NANASE GONNA BE ARRESTED?!
I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE SHE'S A MURDERER.
IS SHE REALLY ALIVE?
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN?
"YOU WERE IN MAKURAZAKA CITY LAST NIGHT."

Nishi-Makur aka
WERE YOU THERE, DISGUISED AS STEEL LADY NANASE...
...PLANNING TO ATTACK SOMEONE AND SPREAD THE RUMORS FURTHER?
...NO, YOU HAD ALREADY CAUSED A SCARE RECENTLY, SO YOU WERE LIKELY DOING SOME PLANNING FOR YOUR NEXT HIT.
THIS PLACE IS PRETTY DESERTED.
I CAN TAKE A BREAK HERE, THEN TURN AROUND AND GO BACK TO TOWN.
WHEW...

ZSH
THAT'S WHEN YOU RAN INTO DETECTIVE TERADA—THE MAN WHO WAS LOOKING FOR STEEL LADY NANASE.
THE DETECTIVE HAD SUSPECTED THAT STEEL LADY NANASE WAS A MORTAL IN GHOST'S CLOTHING, AND YOUR PRESENCE THERE WAS SUSPICIOUS.
YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN DRESSED NORMALLY,
BUT YOU STILL WOULDN'T HAVE ESCAPED HIS NOTICE.
NOT WITH THOSE OVER-SIZED BREASTS.
YOUR BUST REMINDED HIM OF STEEL LADY NANASE, AND HIS INTUITION WENT TO WORK!

TERADA-SAN TOLD ME HE WASN'T INTO LARGE BREASTS.
カタ TKKA
カタ TKKA
カタ TKKA
KURÔ-SENPAI'S LIKE THAT, TOO.
MY PETITE FRAME IS—
KURÔ-KUN DOESN'T JUDGE WOMEN BASED ON THE SIZE OF THEIR BREASTS OR THEIR BODY.
THUD
ガッ WHACK
ダッ WHAM
グッ
SCRUNCH
—!!

KA-KRAK
GWHRL
BA-BAM
TUMBLE
TUMBLE
Saki-san!
DAAAZE
GASP
JUST ...
JUST MAKE YOUR NEXT POST...
WOBBLE
WOBBLE

Police Department Chief Detective
Terada, Tokunosuke
WE'VE HAD A LOT OF REPORTS LATELY, ABOUT A MANIAC WANDERING AROUND MAKURAZAKA.
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ANSWERING SOME QUESTIONS.
...OH, YEAH.
EVERYONE'S HEARD THE RUMORS.
THIS WAS NOT A PART OF YOUR PLAN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'M ON MY WAY TO THE CORNER STORE TO BUY SOME THINGS.
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?
I'M JUST SO HUNGRY.
AND WHEREABOUTS DO YOU LIVE?
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
YOU ANSWERED HIS QUESTIONS. YOU HAD NO OTHER CHOICE.
BUT THEN SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENED—SOMETHING EVEN MORE UNEXPECTED.
...

I'VE SEEN HER ONCE...
NO.
SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE.
HER FACE. IT'S THE SAME.
...NANASE.
ARE YOU KARIN NANASE?

ZSH
THE DETECTIVE WAS STUNNED.
KARIN NANASE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD, BUT HERE SHE WAS IN FRONT OF HIM.
HIS PANIC RENDERED THE BIG, STRONG DETECTIVE DEFENSELESS.
WHAM
YOU SAW YOUR CHANCE, AND YOU TOOK IT.

CRUMBLE
パラ
WITHOUT A SECOND'S DELAY, YOU FOUND SOMETHING NEARBY AND YOU HIT HIM IN THE HEAD.
YOU WERE LUCKY AND MANAGED TO EITHER KILL HIM...
...OR KNOCK HIM UNCONSCIOUS.
HUFF...
ドクン BA-DMP
HUFF...
ドクン BA-DMP
YOU DECIDED TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE STEEL LADY NANASE'S DOING.
IF PEOPLE CONNECTED THE MURDER TO THE GHOST, THE RUMORS WOULD GO HAND IN HAND, ALL WORKING TOWARD YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL.

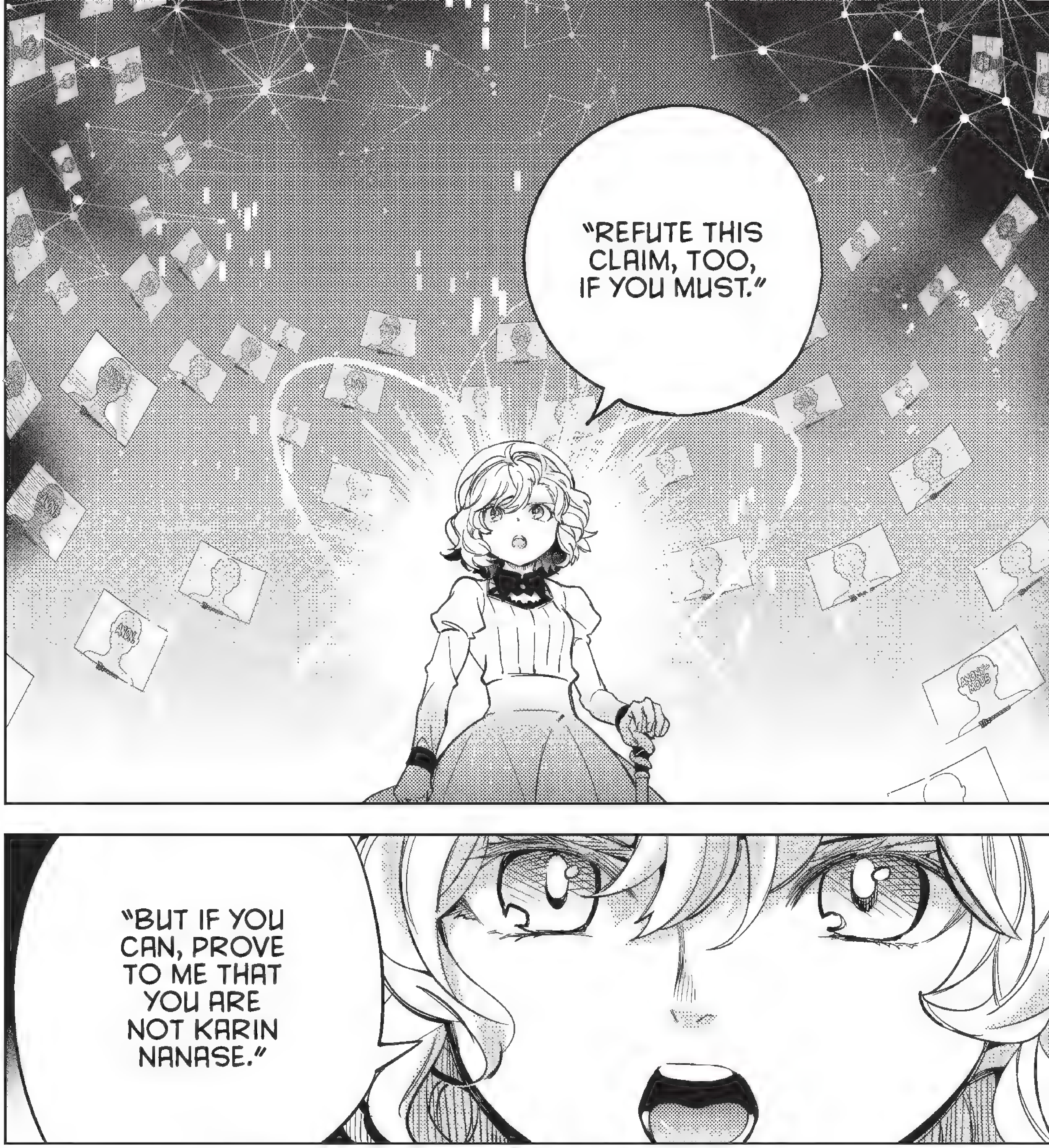
ヒュ
SWISH
パァーン
POW
ゴッ
KLONG

THE BURLY DETECTIVE HAD NO OTHER EXTERNAL INJURIES, AND THERE WAS NO SIGN OF A STRUGGLE. AND WITH A CRUSHED FACE...
...IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO PIN THE MURDER ON YOU, A WOMAN.
YOU COULDN'T LOSE.

WHAM
ズン
ZHNN
ズン
ZHNN
RIP
ビリ
SPLASH
バシャ

YOU PICKED UP THE NEAREST HEAVY OBJECT AND DESTROYED THE DETECTIVE'S FACE...
...THEN DISPOSED OF ANY INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE...
...AND LEFT THE GAS STATION.
"THIS IS THE EXTENT OF YOUR CRIMES."

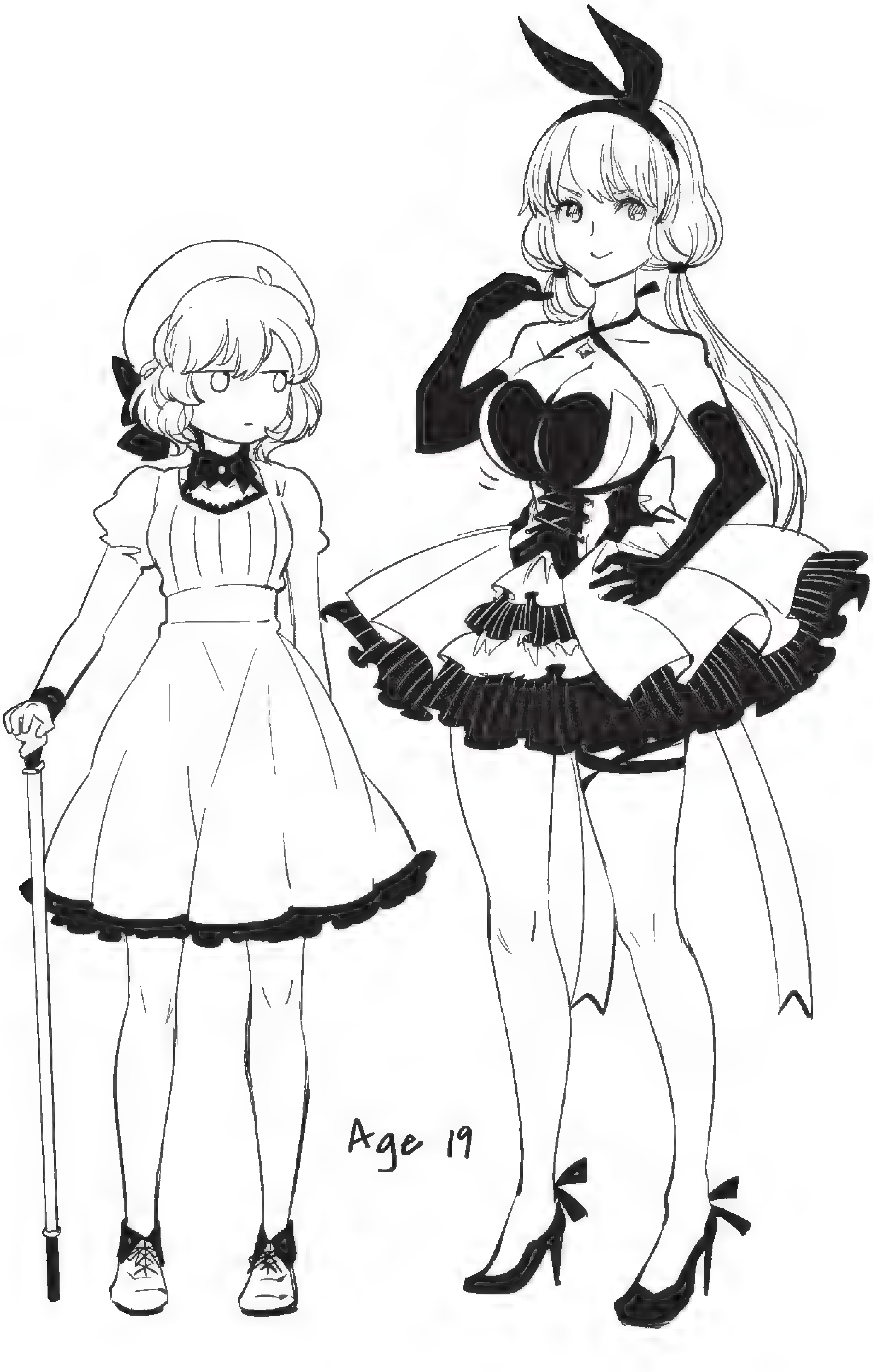
BASH
カタ
TAK-TAP

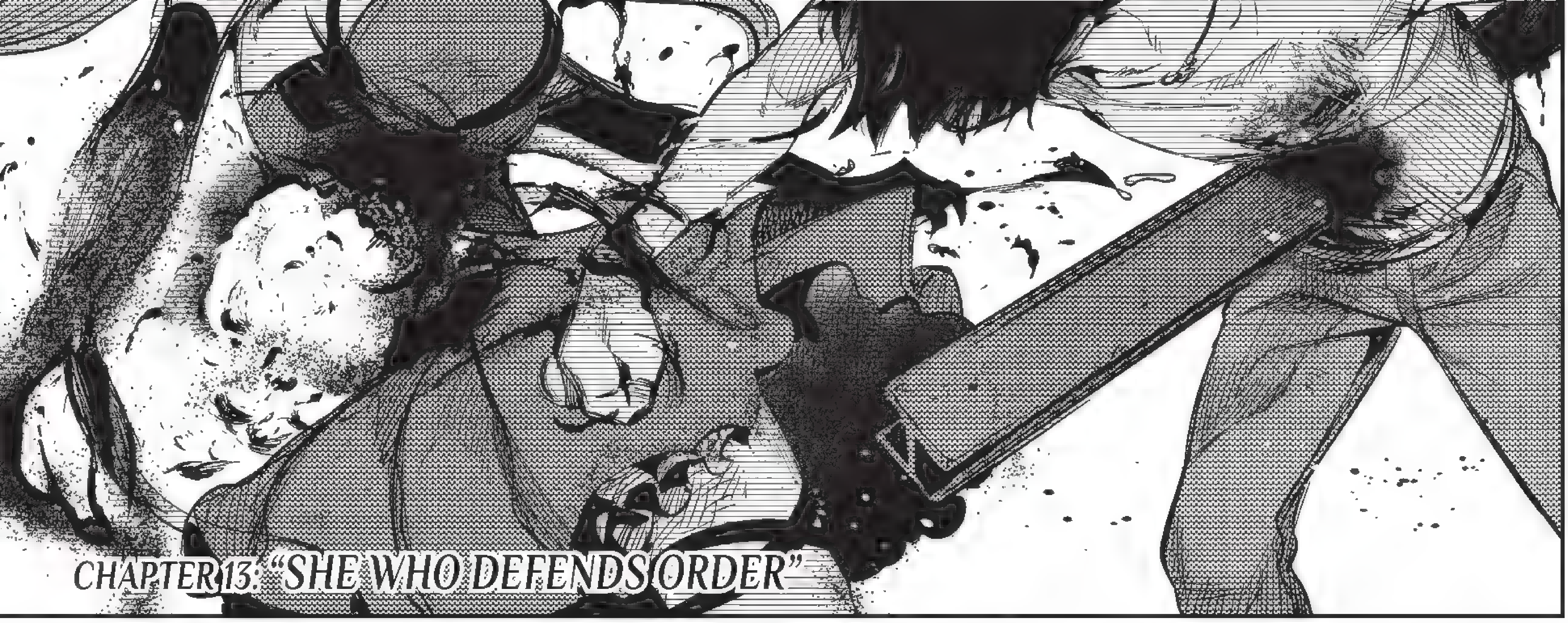

"REFUTE THIS CLAIM, TOO, IF YOU MUST."
ANON.
ANONY-MOUS
"BUT IF YOU CAN, PROVE TO ME THAT YOU ARE NOT KARIN NANASE."

<538> Name: kuebiko 09/05 00:25 ID:Mmimn43
But if you can,
prove to me that you are not Karin Nanase.

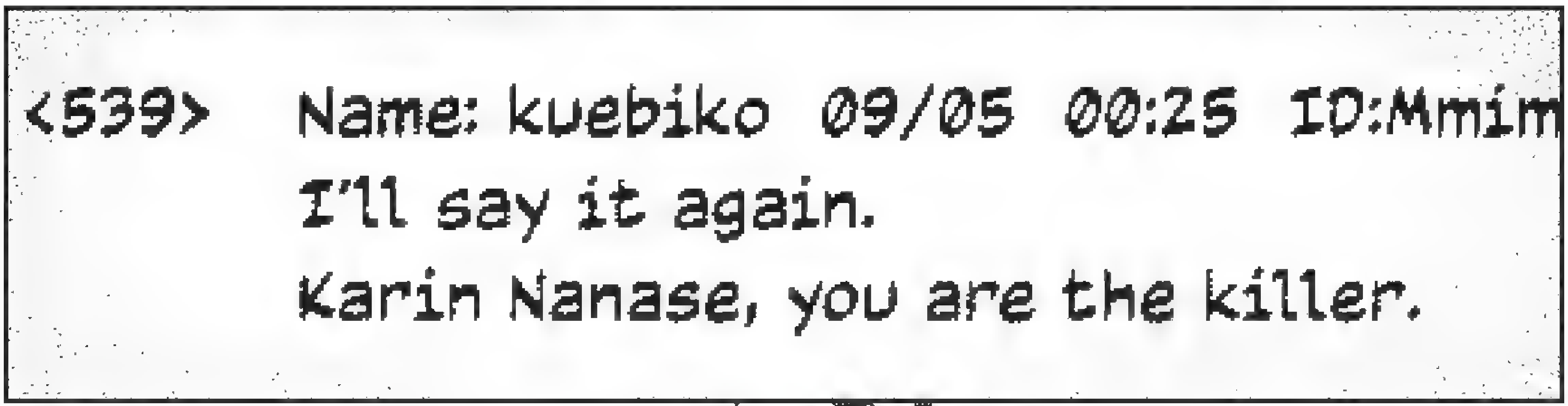
"I'LL SAY IT AGAIN."

"KARIN NANASE. YOU ARE THE KILLER."

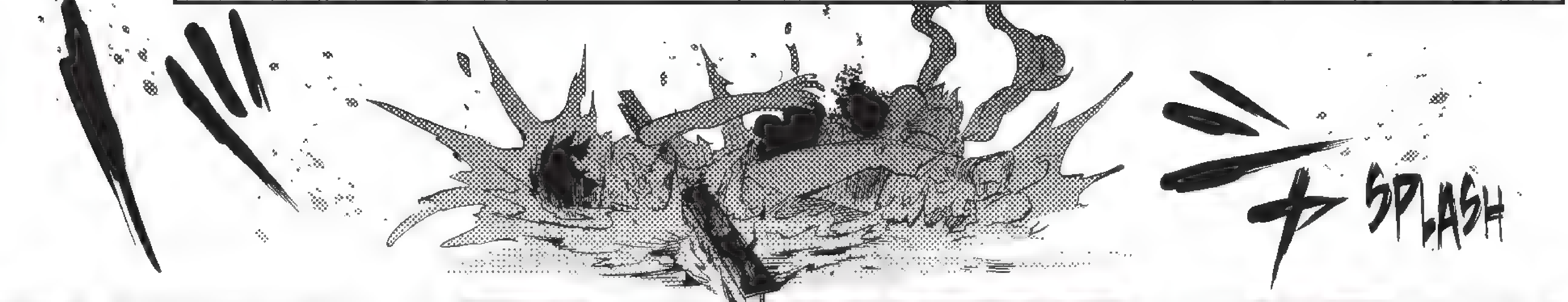

Age 19

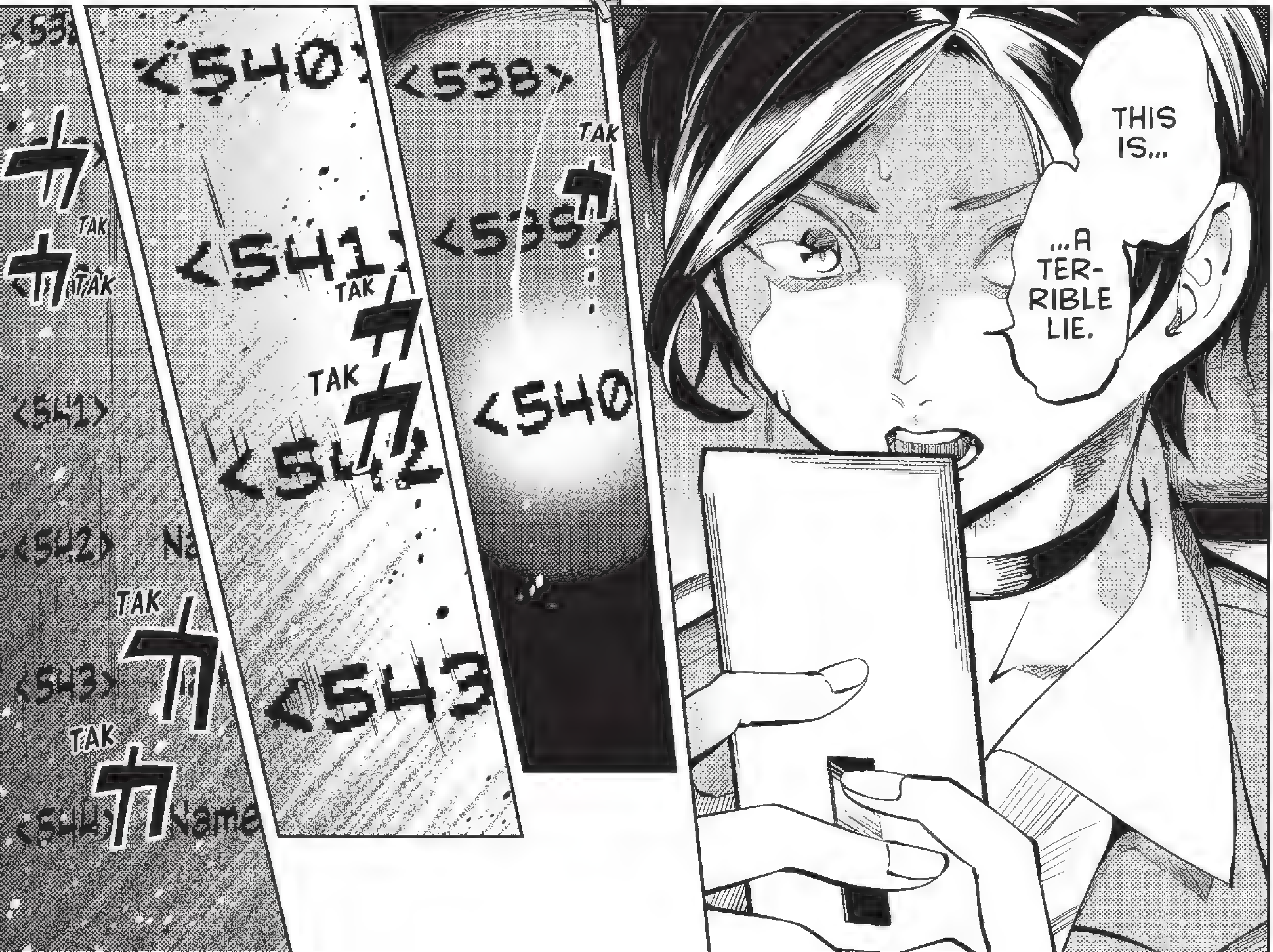


CHAPTER 13: "SHE WHO DEFENDS ORDER"



<539> Name: kuebiko 09/05 00:25 ID:Mmim
I'll say it again.
Karin Nanase, you are the killer.




THIS IS...
...A TERRIBLE LIE.
<538>
TAK
<539>
<540
<543
<540>
<541>
TAK
TAK
<542
<53
TAK
TAK
<541>
<542> Na
TAK
<543>
TAK
<544> Name

13> Name: Withheld by Request 09/

Karin Nanase is alive?!

Withheld by Request 09/05 00:28 ID:7ew34re
Hey,
Webmaster, if you're reading, come out here!

<618> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:28 ID:fdx4w3x
Is the webmaster really Karin Nanase,
and is Karin Nanase really the killer?

<624> Name: Withheld
And Steel Lady Nanase is a fake?

<625> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:30
Who's posting all this stuff?
At first I thought they were just
playing around, making up theories.

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:30
aybe someone involved in the case?

Withheld by Request 09/05 00:30
impossible and you know it.

eld by Request 09/05 00:31
y story.

3> Name: Withheld by Request
If she's a ghost,
wouldn't she appear again?

9> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05
Yeah. Are there any Steel Lady Na
sightings tonight?

0> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:34
I haven't seen any posts about it.

51> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:35 ID:b
And there were a ton of sightings up until
yesterday.
Isn't that weird?

52> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:35 ID:jp;ho7r6
So the killer really is Karin Nanase?

<658> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05
If Karin Nanase is alive, do you think she'll be arreste

<659> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:36 ID: ykn234d
I still don't believe it.
Switching the bodies?
That's impossible!

6> Name: Withheld by Requ
Is it true?
Or false?

<687> Name: Withheld by Request 09/
Did we just witness the solving
of a mystery?

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00
I don't know.
How can we possibly know?

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00
But if it is true, we just experience
something awesome, right?

THIS WEBSITE IS PART OF THE KILLER'S PLOT.
AND SO WAS THE REJECTION OF HER THREE PREVIOUS SOLUTIONS.
SHE IS UNEQUIVOCALLY SUPPLANTING STEEL LADY NANASE...
I'll s ain.
Karin Na are the killer
...WITH THE FACT THAT KARIN NANASE IS ALIVE.
HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH ALL OF THIS?
BUT RIKKA-SAN IS THE REAL WEB-MASTER.
WHAT IF SHE COMES ON AND POSTS...
..."I AM NOT KARIN NANASE"—
GASP
WHO WOULD BELIEVE IT?

EVERYONE ALREADY BELIEVES THAT KARIN NANASE IS THE WEBMASTER.
THEY LOVE THE IDEA—IT'S MUCH MORE INTERESTING.
WHETHER SHE SAYS SHE IS KARIN NANASE OR NOT, THE CURRENT OF THOUGHT WILL NOT CHANGE.
ZH
ZH

IWANAGA-SAN...
...USED HER FIRST THREE SOLUTIONS TO FEED EVERYONE THE BASIC ELEMENTS...
...THAT WOULD MAKE THEM BELIEVE HER ULTIMATE SOLUTION.
SHE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PULL IT OFF IF THE FUTURE HADN'T BEEN PREDETERMINED AGAIN AND AGAIN.
THROUGH HIS REPEATED DEATHS...
...HE CHOSE FUTURE AFTER FUTURE TO DESTROY THE MONSTER.

KURÔ-SENPAI HAS DECIDED THE FUTURE.
B-DMP
THAK
NO OPTIONS TO CHANGE THAT FUTURE ARE WITHIN RIKKA-SAN'S REACH.

SHE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO USE THIS SITE...
FWIP
ぱっ
...TO CONTROL STEEL LADY NANASE AGAIN.
ZH
ズ…

NOW THEN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE.
GNN
KZH ZH
THE TIME HAS COME TO CAST YOUR VOTES.
TAK TAK
TAK TAK
ZSH
IS THERE SUCH A GHOST AS STEEL LADY NANASE?
OR ISN'T THERE?
Z- Z- ZSH

<722> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID:bvytdrr
There's no such thing as Steel Lady Nanase.
Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56
one's been saying it's a
ZSH
Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56
Nanase is dead.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR A SPECIAL PROCEDURE.
WHICHEVER YOU CHOOSE, THE VOTES WILL BE CAST AUTOMATICALLY.
Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:58
The police probabl looked into it
Z-ZSH
Name: Withheld by Request
Nanas
I SIMPLY NEED ALL OF YOU TO FREELY MAKE YOUR WISH,
IN YOUR OWN MIND, BASED ON YOUR OWN CONSCIENCE.
Name: Withheld by
There is no ghost.
ZSH

THERE ARE TRUE SPECTRES IN THE WORLD, BUT THERE ARE ALSO MANY FALSE ONES.
FICTION REVERTS TO FICTION.
GH GH
ギリ ギリ
AND THE MONSTER BORN OF A LIE...
...IS DESTROYED BY A LIE.

WHAM

BASH
KRIK
KRIK
Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 02:15
Steel Lady Nanase was a hoax?
Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 02:15
And we're absolutely sure Nanase is the
Name: Withheld by Re
That's
ithheld by R
Karin Nanase
e: Withheld by Re
ere is no Steel Lad
Name: Withheld by Req
No one knows the trut
NO
KA-
CRACK

SPLOOSH

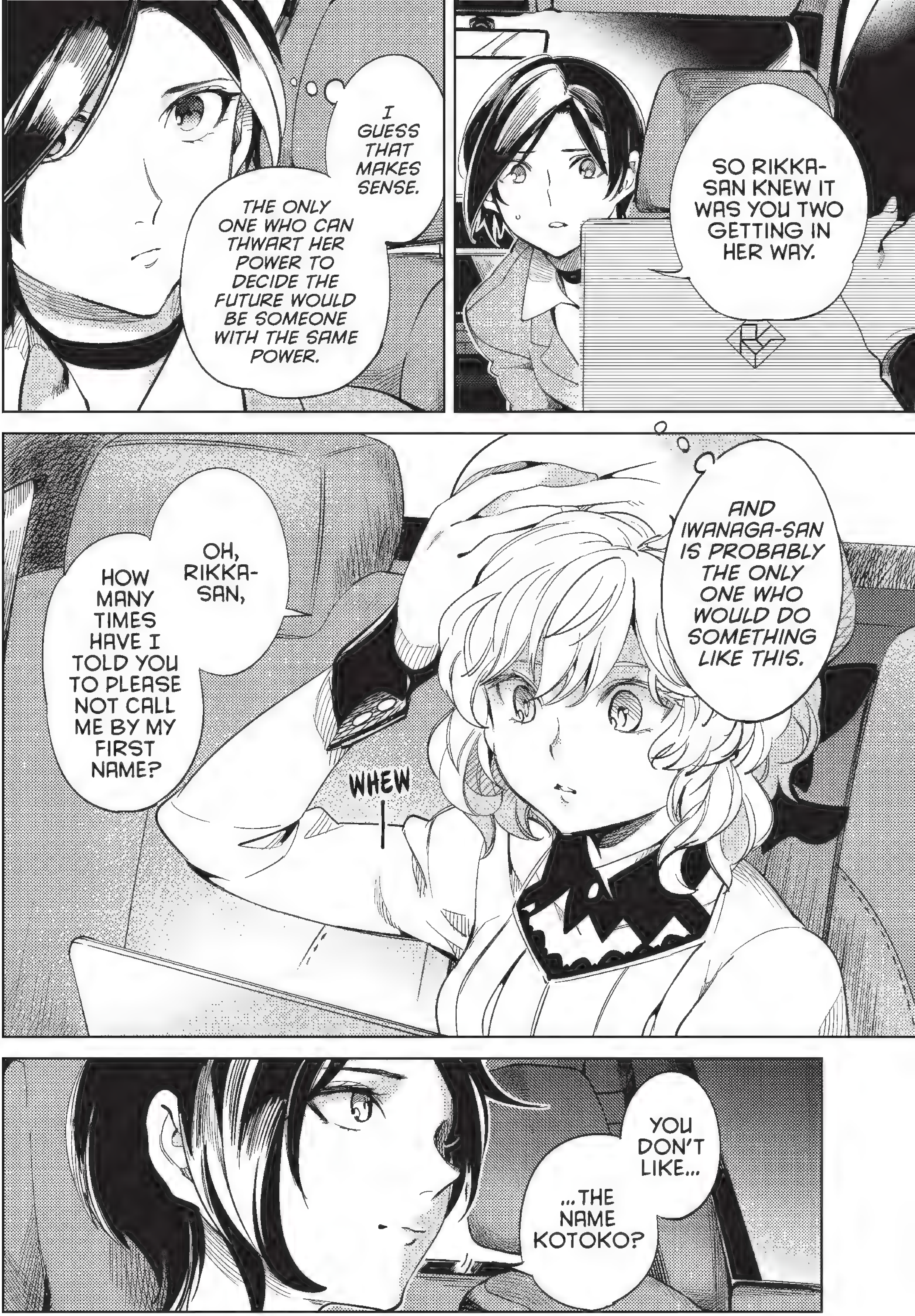
ZHRR
ザラ…

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:51
That's how I got here. I thought it was going to be occult stuff, but it turned into a pretty interesting mystery.
<721> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56
If the rumors were spread on purpose.
<723> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56
<724> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56
Karin Nanase is dead.
We just have to investigate the webmaster.
<728> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05
There is no Steel Lady Nanase.
<725> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:57
If Karin's really dead, I'm stunned.
<738> Name: Withheld by Request
not here?
<722> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID:bvytdrr
There's no such thing as Steel Lady Nanase.
Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:57
Let's catch the crook.
<687> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05
Did we just witness the solving of a mystery?
Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:58
The police probably already looked into it.
<728> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:59
So Steel Lady Nanase doesn't exist?
Withheld by Request 09/05 00:59
THE VOTES ARE IN.
THE MAJORITY FINDS STEEL LADY NANASE TO BE FICTION.

RIKKA SAKURA-GAWA'S PLOT...
...HAS BEEN VOTED DOWN.
ザァ
ZSHH

TAP
WHEW
OOH.
WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
DING
I GOT AN EMAIL.
IT'S FROM RIKKA-SAN.
WHIRL
HUH?
THIS IS KURÔ-SENPAI'S COMPUTER. THAT'S PROBABLY HOW SHE KNEW THE ADDRESS.
Rikka

Kurô, Kotoko-san,
You win this round.
Until next time.


SO RIKKA-SAN KNEW IT WAS YOU TWO GETTING IN HER WAY.
I GUESS THAT MAKES SENSE.
THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN THWART HER POWER TO DECIDE THE FUTURE WOULD BE SOMEONE WITH THE SAME POWER.
AND IWANAGA-SAN IS PROBABLY THE ONLY ONE WHO WOULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
OH, RIKKA-SAN,
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU TO PLEASE NOT CALL ME BY MY FIRST NAME?
WHEW
YOU DON'T LIKE...
...THE NAME KOTOKO?

IT'S HARD FOR *ME* TO SAY, SO I ASSUME IT'S HARD FOR OTHERS, AS WELL.
GULP
IT JUST DOESN'T SOUND QUITE RIGHT WHEN PEOPLE CALL ME THAT.
THAT'S WHY I ASK KURÔ-SENPAI TO CALL ME BY MY SURNAME.
GULP
OH.
SO THAT'S WHY YOUR "BOYFRIEND" DOESN'T CALL YOU BY YOUR GIVEN NAME.
OH? DID YOU DOUBT OUR RELATIONSHIP?
I TOLD YOU AS MUCH WHEN WE FIRST MET.
ANYWAY...
RIKKA-SAN WROTE "THIS ROUND."
I'M SURE SHE'LL TRY TO MAKE ANOTHER IMAGINARY MONSTER.
SHUT
SHE'S NOT THE TYPE TO LET A SETBACK LIKE THIS STOP HER.

YOU DIDN'T REALLY EXPLAIN THIS BEFORE, BUT...
WHY IS RIKKA-SAN DOING THIS?
KA-CHAK
ANY NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES LIE HIDDEN WITHIN THE HUMAN IMAGINATION.
IT CAN MAKE YÔKAI,
GHOSTS...
SHUT
...AND DEMONS.
WE GIVE LIFE TO MONSTERS WITHOUT EVEN REALIZING IT.
AND IF THAT'S TRUE, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

ONE COULD EVEN CREATE A GOD.
BUT...
THAT'S ...

CREAK
YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION.
WHY WOULD SHE WANT TO MAKE A GOD?

TEP TEP
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK.
TROT
TROT
I SUSPECT YOU'VE EXPENDED FAR TOO MUCH ENERGY, DYING AND COMING BACK TO LIFE SO MANY TIMES.
YOU MUST TAKE NOURISHMENT IMMEDIATELY.
HERE, EAT THIS.
SHOVE
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS NOURISHMENT.

AFTER CREATING ALL THOSE POSSIBILITIES, ALL THOSE FUTURES.
I KNOW HOW MUCH ENERGY IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN TO PUT THEM IN MY REACH.
NOW, NOW, DON'T SAY THAT.
SHOONK
EAT.
IT WILL MAKE SAKI-SAN FEEL BETTER TO SEE YOU REPLENISH YOUR ENERGY LIKE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING.
I ONLY ASK THAT YOU ALLOW ME TO PARTAKE OF *YOUR* BANANA LATER.
PLEASE.
I'M BEGGING YOU, DON'T MAKE THOSE VULGAR JOKES NOW.
SWISH
ひゅっ

OH, JOY!
POOF
THE INFERNAL STEEL LADY HAS VANISHED.
RUSTLE
JOY!
MURMUR
MURMUR
JOY!
MARCH
MARCH
OH, JOY!
HUG
TUG
HOORAY! HOORAY!
TUG
ACK!
HUH?

HOORAY FOR OUR LADY!

HOO-RAY!
HOORAY!
LONG LIVE OUR LADY!

ざざあっ
Z-ZSHH
LET'S JUST GO HOME.
AWWW.
LET ME BASK IN THEIR PRAISE JUST A LITTLE LONGER.
SAKI-SAN LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GOING TO PASS OUT.
RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE

WORN OUT
SIGH...
LAST NIGHT WAS REALLY THE WORST.
FIRST A GHOST...
...BEATS KURÔ-KUN TO A BLOODY PULP.
THEN A PARADE OF DEMONS.
IT ALL MAKES THE KAPPA LOOK LIKE A PET TURTLE.
YUMIHARA-KUN.

STAFF SERGEANT.
YOU LOOK PALE.
I JUST DIDN'T SLEEP MUCH LAST NIGHT.
OH, REALLY?
...
...DON'T LET THOSE INTERNET RUMORS BOTHER YOU.
THE GUYS ON THE INVESTIGATION AREN'T TAKING THEM SERIOUSLY.
ALTHOUGH PEOPLE *ARE* TALKING ABOUT IT IN THE PRECINCT.

INTERNET RUMORS... SIR?
OH, IT'S OKAY IF YOU DON'T KNOW.
...
ZSHH
ザァ
I'M SORRY, SAKI-SAN.
IF I HAD DONE SOMETHING TO STOP RIKKA-SAN SOONER,
WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DEAL WITH HER BEFORE DETECTIVE TERADA ENDED UP DEAD.

...BUT NEITHER OF YOU...
...COULD HAVE PREDICTED THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
SO...
ALL I CAN SAY IS...IT IS WHAT IT IS.
YOUR POWER OVER THE FUTURE...
...ISN'T SO STRONG THAT IT CAN SAVE EVERYTHING.
SEPTEMBER 5, SUNDAY
HARDLY ANYONE BROUGHT UP STEEL LADY NANASE...
...AS IF THEY ACTUALLY BELIEVED IN THE SPECTRE ANYMORE.

Fug
search jap
STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI
SEARCH
TKKA-TAK
カタ
EVERY-ONE'S INTEREST TURNED TO SOLVING THE RIDDLE...
...OF WHETHER OR NOT KARIN NANASE SURVIVED.
RESULTS: ABOUT 880,000
STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI
STEEL LADY NANASE - KIKIPEDIA
STEEL LADY NANASE: THE URBAN LEGEND
STEEL LADY NANASE ARCHIVE
CLICK
カチ
PAGE NOT FOUND
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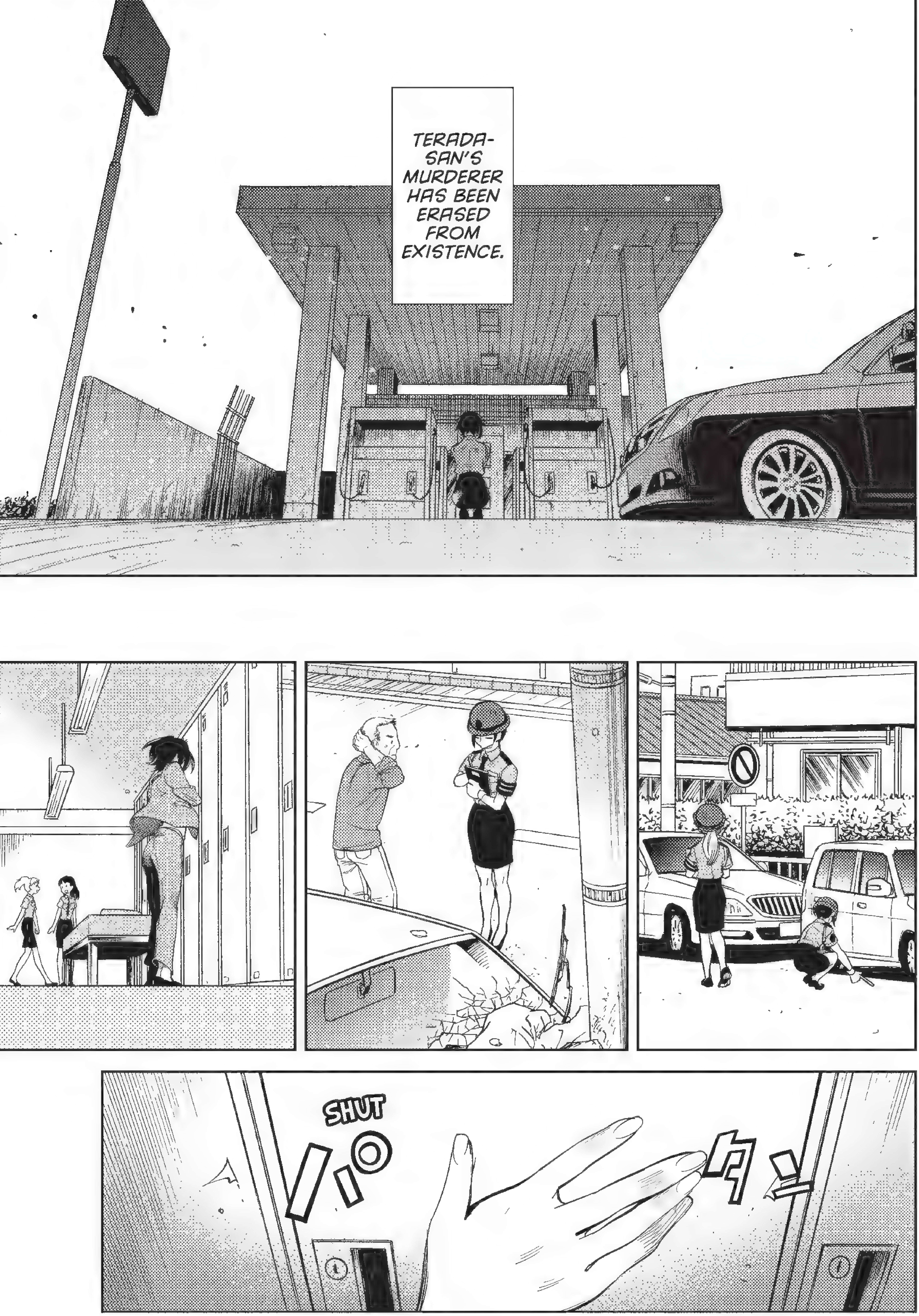
AFTER HER DEFEAT, RIKKA-SAN DELETED THE WIKI.
STEEL LADY NANASE ARCHIVE
STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI WIKI
STEEL LADY NANASE INCIDENT EXPLORATION
CLICK
カチ
STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI WIKI
THIS WIKI WAS MADE TO COLLECT AND INVESTIGATE ALL THE COMMENTS POSTED TO THE STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI ON SEPTEMBER 4.
-DID KARIN NANA
-WHAT IS THE NANASE WIK
-POSTED
SCREEN
SCREENSHOT
THOSE WHO WITNESSED THE SERIES OF EVENTS STARTED TALKING ABOUT A DIFFERENT URBAN LEGEND—
THE FICTITIOUS TALE THAT KARIN NANASE HAD LIVED AND THE BODY BELONGED TO SOMEONE ELSE.
STEEL LADY N
THIS MADE
COMM STED
SEPT
DID KARIN NANASE DO
WHAT IS THE STEEL L NANASE WIKI?
IT WAS SO MELODRAMATIC THAT NO ONE WAS EAGER TO VOICE THE THEORY IN THE REAL WORLD.
ALTHOUGH EVERYONE ACCEPTED THE STORY, IT REMAINS A SEPARATE REALITY FROM OUR OWN.
I THINK MOST PEOPLE WOULD ASSUME IT WAS ALL SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED ON TV OR IN THE PAPERS—NOTHING MORE THAN A STORY.

THE DRAMA WAS RESOLVED WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE INTERNET.
LOOKING FOR A SEQUEL IN REALITY...
...MAY TARNISH THE STORY.
AND IN THAT CASE, I DOUBT ANYONE WILL TRY CONTACTING ANYONE INVOLVED WITH KARIN NANASE IN REAL LIFE.
VROOM
EVEN IF THE STORIES TAKE ON A LIFE OF THEIR OWN...
...AND CONTINUE TO BE TOLD IN SECRET...
...THEY ALL DENY THE EXISTENCE OF STEEL LADY NANASE.
AND SHE PROBABLY PLANNED IT THAT WAY.
...I DEFINITELY DO NOT WANT TO GET ON HER BAD SIDE.

AS FOR THE POLICE...
...LAST I HEARD, THEY WERE PLANNING TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY...
...THAT THE BODY BELONGED TO SOMEONE ELSE, AND TO INVESTIGATE WHO CREATED THAT WEBSITE.
SHUT
BUT THEY'LL NEVER PROVE THAT THE BODY WAS SOMEONE ELSE.
IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE HEADQUARTERS CONCLUDES...
...THAT KARIN NANASE DID DIE IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR,
AND IT WAS ALL AN INTERNET HOAX.
WE'LL NEVER KNOW ABOUT KARIN NANASE, OR WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN HER AND HER FAMILY.


TERADA-SAN'S MURDERER HAS BEEN ERASED FROM EXISTENCE.
SHUT
パタン

WHEW...
?
WORK AS USUAL.
THIS IS WHAT LIFE SHOULD BE.
SAKI-SAN.
HUH?
WHAT?
GLANCE きょろ
GLANCE きょろ
WHERE'S IWANAGA-SAN?

Oh.
SHE'S STILL ASLEEP.
WHAT?
BUT IT'S BEEN ALMOST AN ENTIRE DAY.
カラ
CLATTER
SHE WORKED HER BRAIN HARD ALL DAY YESTERDAY.
I'M NOT SURPRISED.
YOU COULD BE A LITTLE MORE CONCERNED, THOUGH.
I WILL BE. IF IT'S NECESSARY.
...IT'S ABOUT RIKKA-SAN, ISN'T IT?

YES.
WHAT IS SHE AFTER?
IWANAGA-SAN WOULDN'T GIVE ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER.
WELL... *I'VE* RESIGNED MYSELF TO MY CONDITION, AND MY POWER.
FOR NOW, I SEEM TO BE GROWING AND AGING LIKE A NORMAL PERSON.
I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DIE IN AN ACCIDENT OR FROM AN INJURY,
BUT I'M HOPEFUL THAT WHEN I LIVE OUT A NORMAL HUMAN LIFESPAN, MAYBE I'LL ACTUALLY DIE AFTER ALL.

I CAN'T USE MY POWER OVER THE FUTURE UNLESS I DIE ANYWAY.
AND MOST EVERYDAY SITUATIONS DON'T TURN INTO A LIFE-OR-DEATH SORT OF DEAL.
SO I THINK I CAN MANAGE...
...TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE.
NORMAL... NORMAL.
BUT RIKKA-SAN DOESN'T FEEL THAT WAY.
SHE IS ACTIVELY USING HER POWER...
...IN AN ATTEMPT TO GO BACK TO BEING A NORMAL HUMAN.

ACTIVELY USING...?
...IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?
EVEN IF SHE USES HER POWER TO SEARCH OUT ALL THE POSSIBILITIES,
HOW IS SHE EVER GOING TO FIND A FUTURE WHERE SHE EXISTS AS A NORMAL HUMAN BEING?
THAT WOULD BE A MIRACLE.
I SEE.
THAT'S WHY SHE WAS AT THE HOSPITAL.

SHE WAS TRYING TO FIND OUT IF MEDICAL SCIENCE COULD MAKE HER NORMAL AGAIN.
AS A RESULT,
SHE REALIZED IT WOULD NEVER BE POSSIBLE, SHE COULD NEVER GET THE FUTURE SHE WANTS USING COMMON-SENSE METHODS. SO SHE GAVE UP ON THEM.
AND THEN WHAT?
THE HUMAN IMAGINATION...
...COULD EVEN CREATE A GOD.

RIKKA-SAN WANTS TO CREATE SOMETHING...
...WITH THE POWER TO MAKE HER NORMAL AGAIN.
A MONSTER OF THE IMAGINATION...
A BEING WITH GODLIKE POWER.
IS THAT WHAT SHE WANTS?
I'M AFRAID SO.
RIKKA-SAN WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO GET WHAT SHE WANTS.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S THINKING.
SHE WANTS TO BE NORMAL, SO SHE'S DOING THE MOST ABNORMAL THING POSSIBLE.
I CAN'T SHAKE THE THOUGHT...
...THAT IN HER HEART,
SHE WAS ALWAYS A MONSTER...
...EVEN BEFORE SHE ATE THE YÔKAI MEAT.

BUT KURÔ-KUN.
YOU LOVE RIKKA-SAN, DON'T YOU?
I CAN'T SHAKE THAT, EITHER.
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
RIKKA-SAN IS PLANNING TO CREATE ANOTHER MONSTER, ISN'T SHE?
IWANAGA WON'T ALLOW IT.
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S HUMAN OR A SPECTRE. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHY.
CREATING UNNATURAL MONSTERS FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL GAIN IS AGAINST THE NATURAL ORDER.

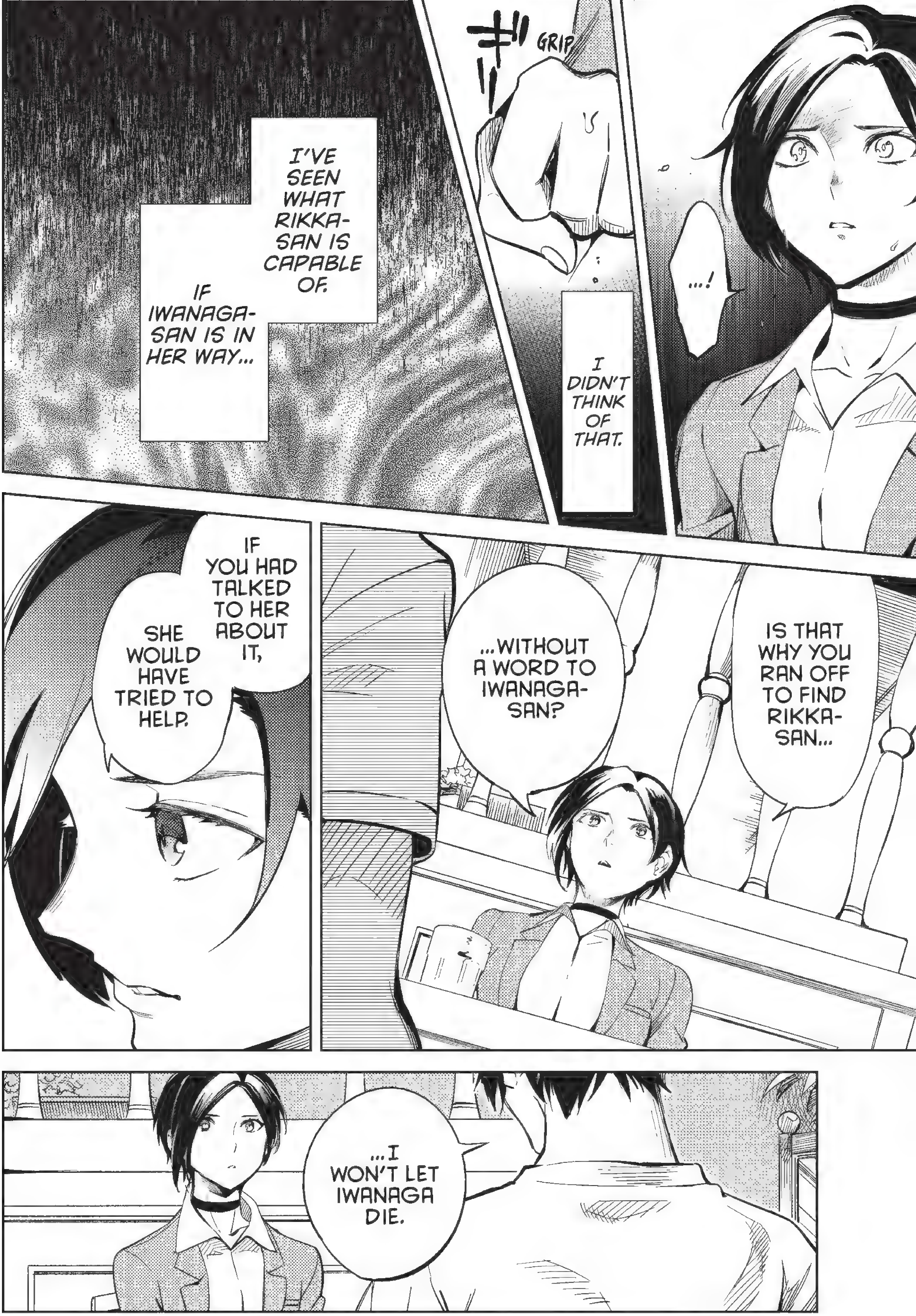
THAT'S WHAT...
...SHE GAVE UP HER RIGHT EYE AND LEFT LEG TO PROTECT.

AND YOU'RE RIGHT THERE TO BACK HER UP.
EVEN IF THAT'S NOT REALLY YOUR STYLE.
カチャ CLINK
EVEN IF SHE WOULD, YOU CAN'T KEEP MY NUMBER.
もく MUNCH
SHE'S THE TYPE TO REALLY LET THAT BOTHER HER.
MUNCH もく
DID YOU DELETE MY NUMBER FROM YOUR PHONE?
YES.
SHE'D NEVER STOP BUGGING ME IF I DIDN'T.
YEAH, BUT...
YOU KNOW WE COULD NEVER MAKE IT WORK.
SAKI-SAN.

I KNOW.
EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I REALLY JUST CAN'T DO IT.
I DON'T MIND SITTING ACROSS THE TABLE FROM YOU.
BUT I STILL HAVE A HARD TIME WITH THE IDEA OF YOU TOUCHING ME.
CLUNK
I'M SORRY.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT WAS MY OWN FAULT FOR TRYING TO KEEP IT A SECRET.
YOU...
...TAKE CARE OF IWANAGA-SAN.
I DO.

SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE OBLIVIOUS TO DANGER.
OR MAYBE SHE'S...
...EVEN MORE NUMB TO FEAR THAN I AM.
SHE'S GOTTEN HURT TRYING TO MEDIATE BETWEEN MONSTERS...
...MORE THAN A COUPLE OF TIMES.
...

THE TRUTH IS, I DIDN'T WANT TO GET HER INVOLVED WITH THIS RIKKA-SAN INCIDENT.
I MEANT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT BEFORE SHE FOUND OUT.
BUT AFTER LAST NIGHT, RIKKA-SAN KNOWS...
...THAT THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE IN HER PATH...
ビク
WINCE
...IS IWA-NAGA.
AND THAT MEANS...
...SHE MIGHT GO AFTER HER NEXT.


...!
GRIP
I DIDN'T THINK OF THAT.
I'VE SEEN WHAT RIKKA-SAN IS CAPABLE OF.
IF IWANAGA-SAN IS IN HER WAY...
IS THAT WHY YOU RAN OFF TO FIND RIKKA-SAN...
...WITHOUT A WORD TO IWANAGA-SAN?
IF YOU HAD TALKED TO HER ABOUT IT,
SHE WOULD HAVE TRIED TO HELP.
...I WON'T LET IWANAGA DIE.

BECAUSE SHE DESERVES TO BE HAPPY.
NOW,
I CAN FINALLY MOVE ON.
I'LL PROBABLY NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN.

A-LING
チリーン
ARE YOU SURE...
...I CAN HAVE THIS BIKE?
SQUEAKY
キュ
SQUEAKY
キュ
IWANAGA BOUGHT IT TO GET AROUND TOWN.
SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE DIDN'T WANT TO BOTHER TAKING IT HOME, SO SHE WAS GOING TO LEAVE IT TO YOU.
If you raise the seat to the highest level, you should be able to ride it.
OH.
AND SHE MADE SURE...
SQUEAKY
キュ
SQUEAKY
キュ
...TO TELL THE CITY'S MONSTERS NOT TO LET YOU SEE THEM.
...THANKS.
THAT'S NOT EVEN A CONSOLATION.
SEE YOU!

CHIRRUP
CHIRRUP
I STILL GET SCARED AT NIGHT.
GULP...
GNN
くい…
ガラ
RATTLE
ガラ
RATTLE
BUT...

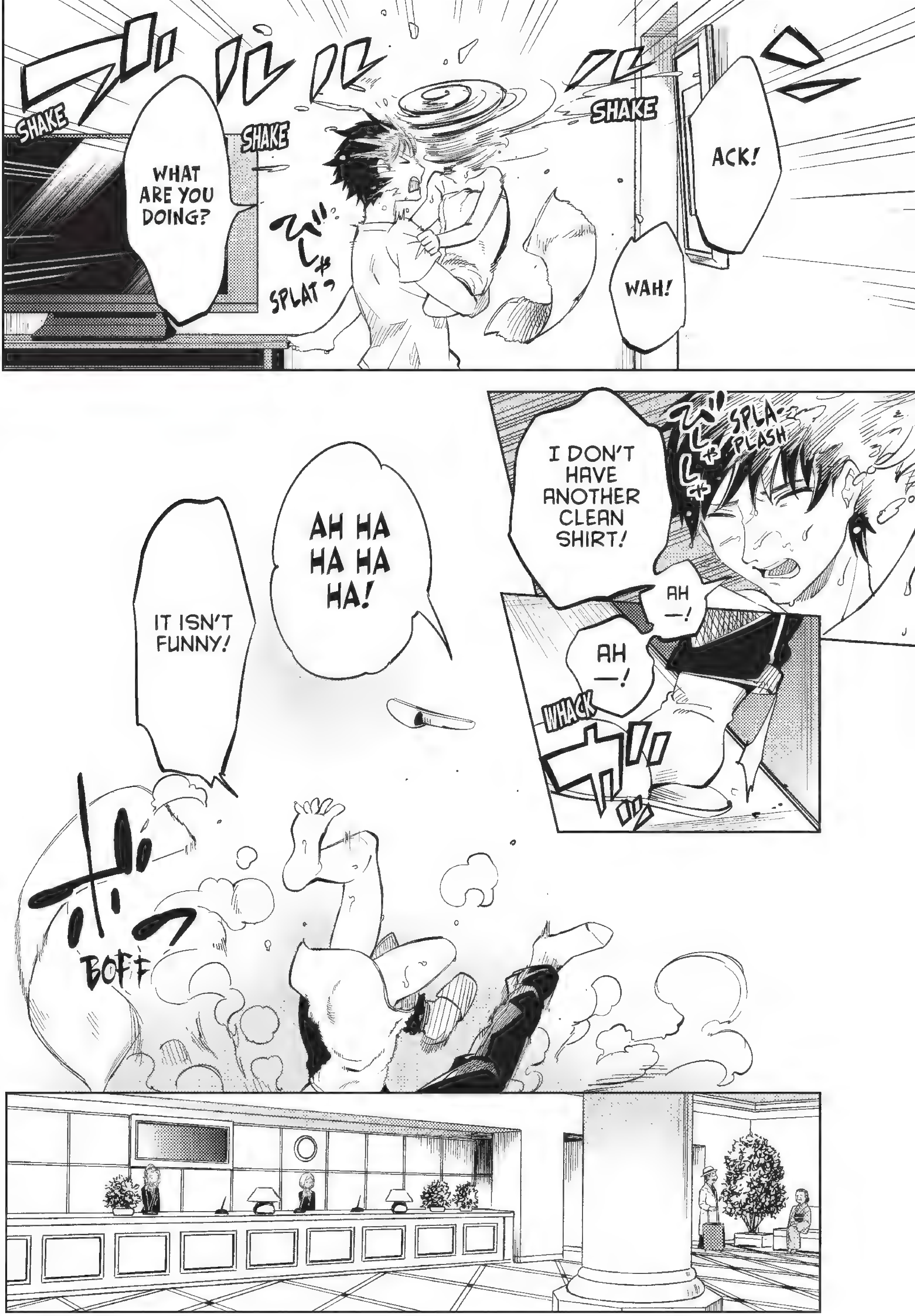
THERE'S SOMEONE OUT THERE KEEPING ORDER.
THE WORLD WON'T END UP A MIXED-UP, CRAZY MESS AFTER ALL.

SEPTEMBER 6, MONDAY
GLUB ボッ
I HAVE FAILED AGAIN!
ゴボ BLUB
ボボ BLUB
THE GREATEST MISTAKE OF MY LIFE!
SLEEPING FOR A DAY AND A HALF?!
MM.
ONLY SIX, EH? BUT I WOULDN'T EXPECT TO FEEL THIS GOOD AFTER A FOUR-HOUR NAP.
WHEW
I FEEL RESTED.
I GAVE THEM SO MUCH TIME!
SO MUCH TIME TO BE ALONE TOGETHER!
MONDAY?!
SEP. 6 (MON.)
6:08
I SLEPT FOR 27 HOURS?!
PHAWAAH!
ざばっ SPLASH
MY LIFE'S DEEPEST REGRET!
コンコン KNOCK KNOCK
IWANAGA?
カチャ KA-CHAK

HUH?
IS SHE NOT HERE?
SEN-PA...
バシャ
SPLASH
AH!
SLIP
バシャ
KA-SPLASH
OH, THE BATH.
ガコン
KA-CLUNK
YOU JUST TAKE YOUR TIME IN THERE.
IF YOU'RE TIRED, WE CAN STAY ANOTHER...
バサ
FWOOSH
ガチャ
KA-CHAK
とん
STOMP
とん
STOMP
とっ
STO-
...NIGHT...

べしゃ
SPLAT
すん SNIFF
すん SNIFF
すん SNIFF
KABOOM
I SMELL SAKI-SAN!
COME ON, THAT'S SILLY.
BUT YOU MET WITH HER, DIDN'T YOU?!
YEAH.
BECAUSE OF THE BIKE.
YOU SAID YOU WERE GONNA LET HER HAVE IT.
I FIGURED I'D BETTER GET THAT TAKEN CARE OF, AND I HAD NOTHING ELSE TO DO.

THAT'S—! ...TRUE, BUT!
HOW DID YOU CONTACT HER?!
WE TRADED PHONE NUMBERS ON THE DRIVE HOME LAST NIGHT.
You slept the whole way.
SNRRR
HRRRRGH!!
Right under my nose!
～～～
HMPH
I ALREADY DELETED HER NUMBER. I WON'T BE SEEING HER AGAIN.
THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM—
YOU REALLY NEED TO MAKE SURE TO DRY OFF. YOU COULD CATCH COLD.
FWOOSH

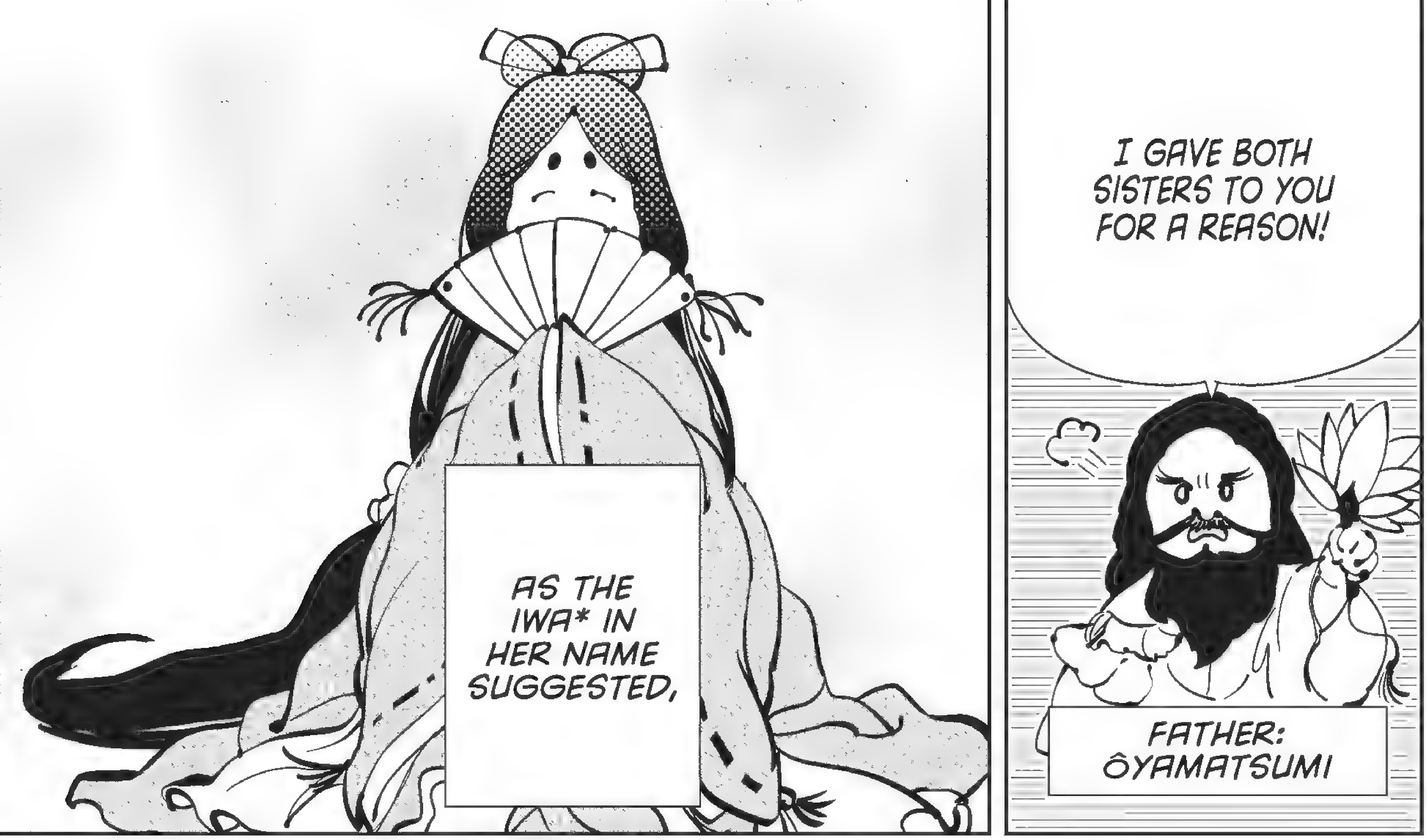

ACK!
WAH!
SHAKE
SHAKE
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SHAKE
SPLAT
SPLA-PLASH
I DON'T HAVE ANOTHER CLEAN SHIRT!
AH—!
AH—!
WHACK
AH HA HA HA HA!
IT ISN'T FUNNY!
BOFF

チャ
CHAK
THANK YOU FOR STAYING WITH US.
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
ARE YOU STILL MAD?
ム
SULK
I'M NOT MAD.
I'M THINKING ABOUT WHAT I DID WRONG.
コッ
CLACK
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW TIRED I AM— I SHOULD WAKE UP AFTER NO MORE THAN HALF A DAY.
IT'S TIME I START BUILDING MY PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STAMINA.

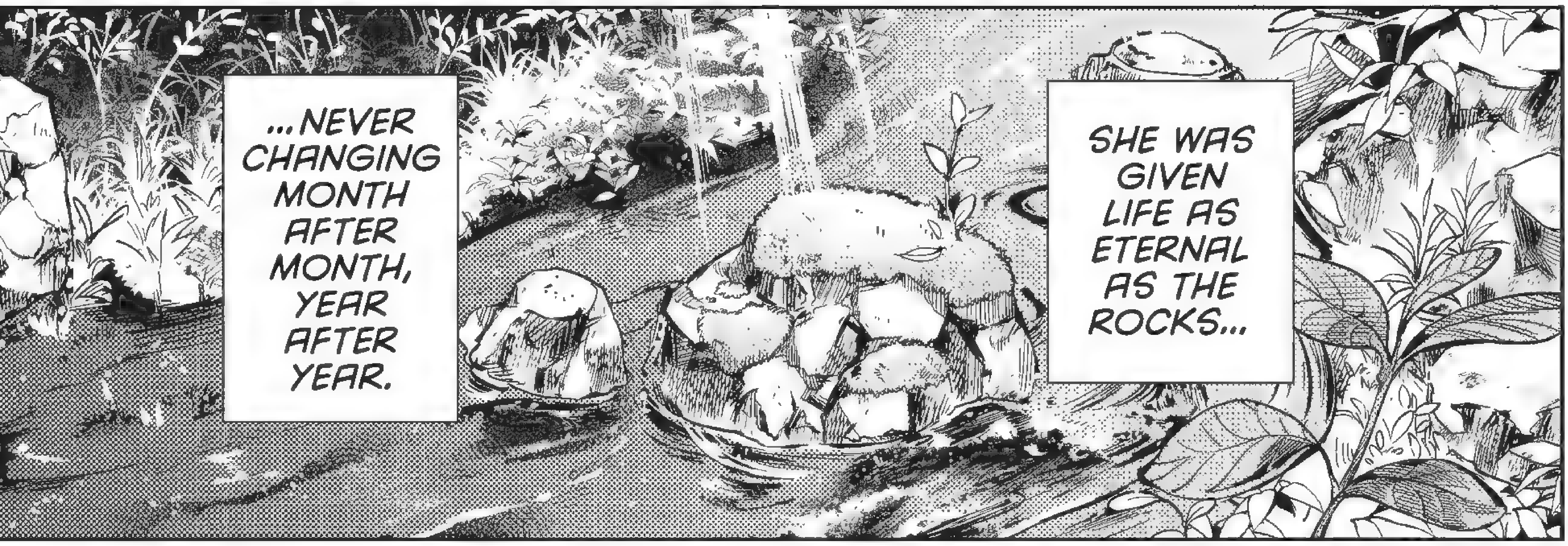
ARE WE GONNA GET A TAXI?
THE STATION'S NOT FAR. LET'S WALK.
LOOKS LIKE RAIN.
ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME SIT WITH YOU WHILE YOU NAP ON A BENCH AGAIN?
EVEN I CAN'T NAP AFTER 28 HOURS OF SLEEP.
Pedestrians and Bicycles Only
SENPAI.

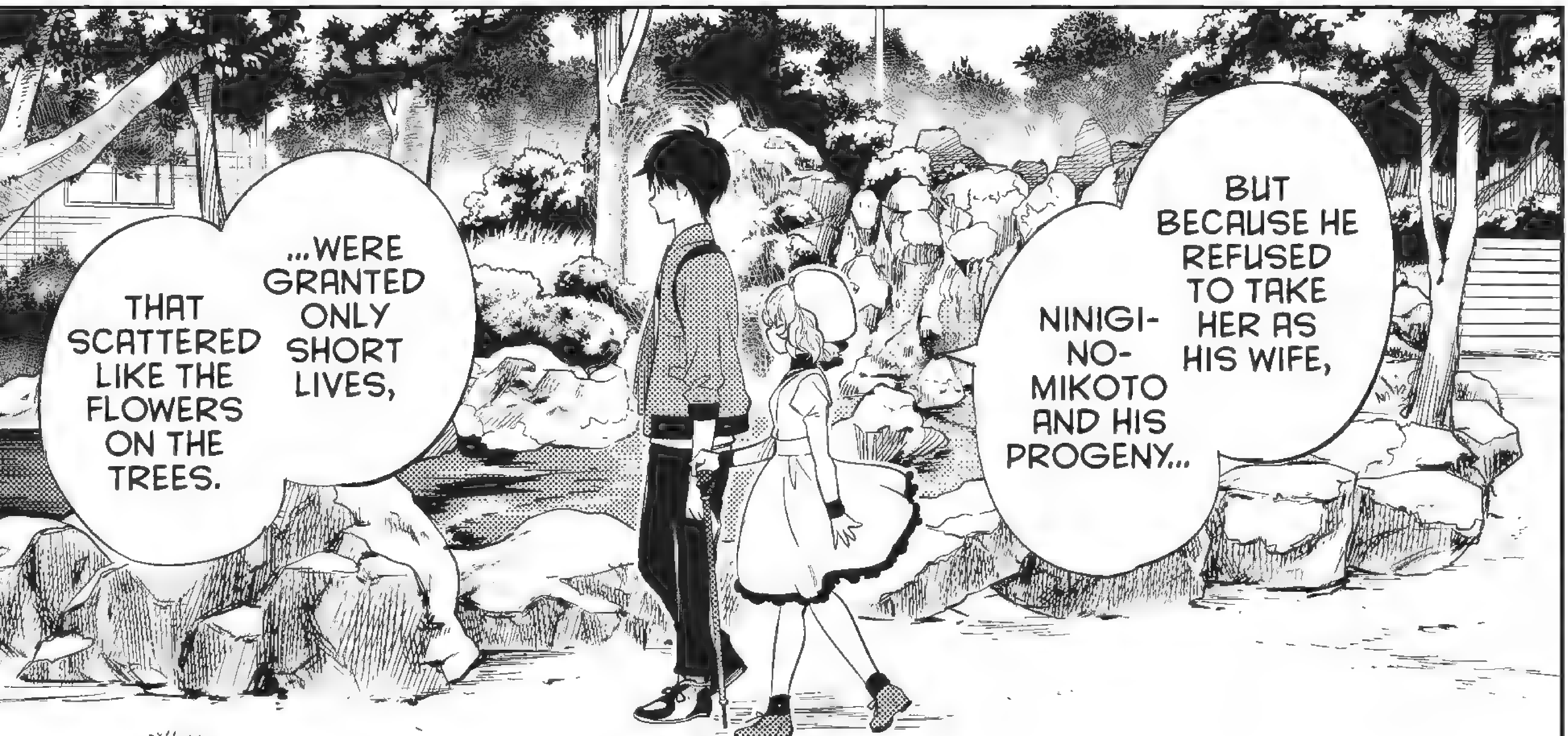
YOU DON'T SUPPOSE RIKKA-SAN WILL MAKE HER NEXT MOVE SOON, DO YOU?
I WILL CALL ON THE NATION'S YÔKAI AND MONSTERS TO INFORM ME IF THEY FIND ANY CLUES.
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO RESORT TO THOSE ANNOYING METHODS AGAIN.
SO IT WOULD BE BEST TO MEET WITH HER IN PERSON AND CONVINCE HER TO STOP.
TEP
TEP
ALSO, PLEASE DO NOT GO OFF WITHOUT TELLING ME AGAIN,
EVEN IF YOU DO GET SOME NEW INFORMATION.
じっ
GLARE
I'LL USE MY DISCRETION.
I *SAID*...!
IWANAGA.

IF YOU KNOW ABOUT KUEBIKO, THEN YOU KNOW ABOUT IWANAGA-HIME, TOO, RIGHT?
IT *IS* HOMOPHONOUS WITH MY SURNAME.
HOW COULD I *NOT* KNOW IT?
古事記
Kojiki
IWANAGA-HIME...
...AND HER YOUNGER SISTER KONOHANA-NO-SAKUYA-BIME
WERE BOTH GIVEN IN MARRIAGE TO NINIGI-NO-MIKOTO, DESCENDANT OF THE HIGH GOD.
BUT NINIGI-NO-MIKOTO...
...ONLY TOOK KONOHANA-NO-SAKUYA-BIME AS HIS WIFE...
...AND SENT IWANAGA-HIME BACK TO HER FATHER.

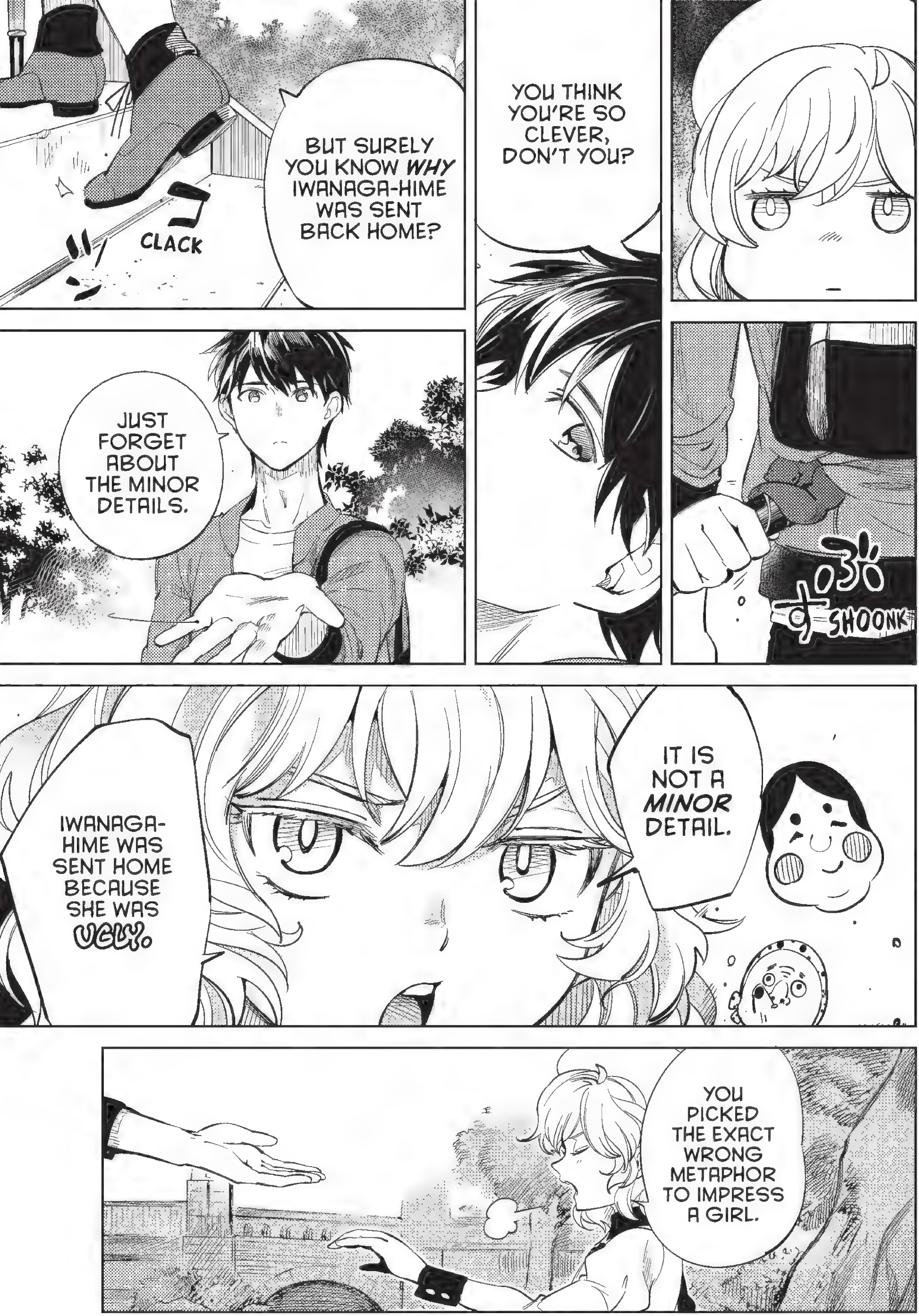

I GAVE BOTH SISTERS TO YOU FOR A REASON!
FATHER: ÔYAMATSUMI
AS THE IWA* IN HER NAME SUGGESTED,

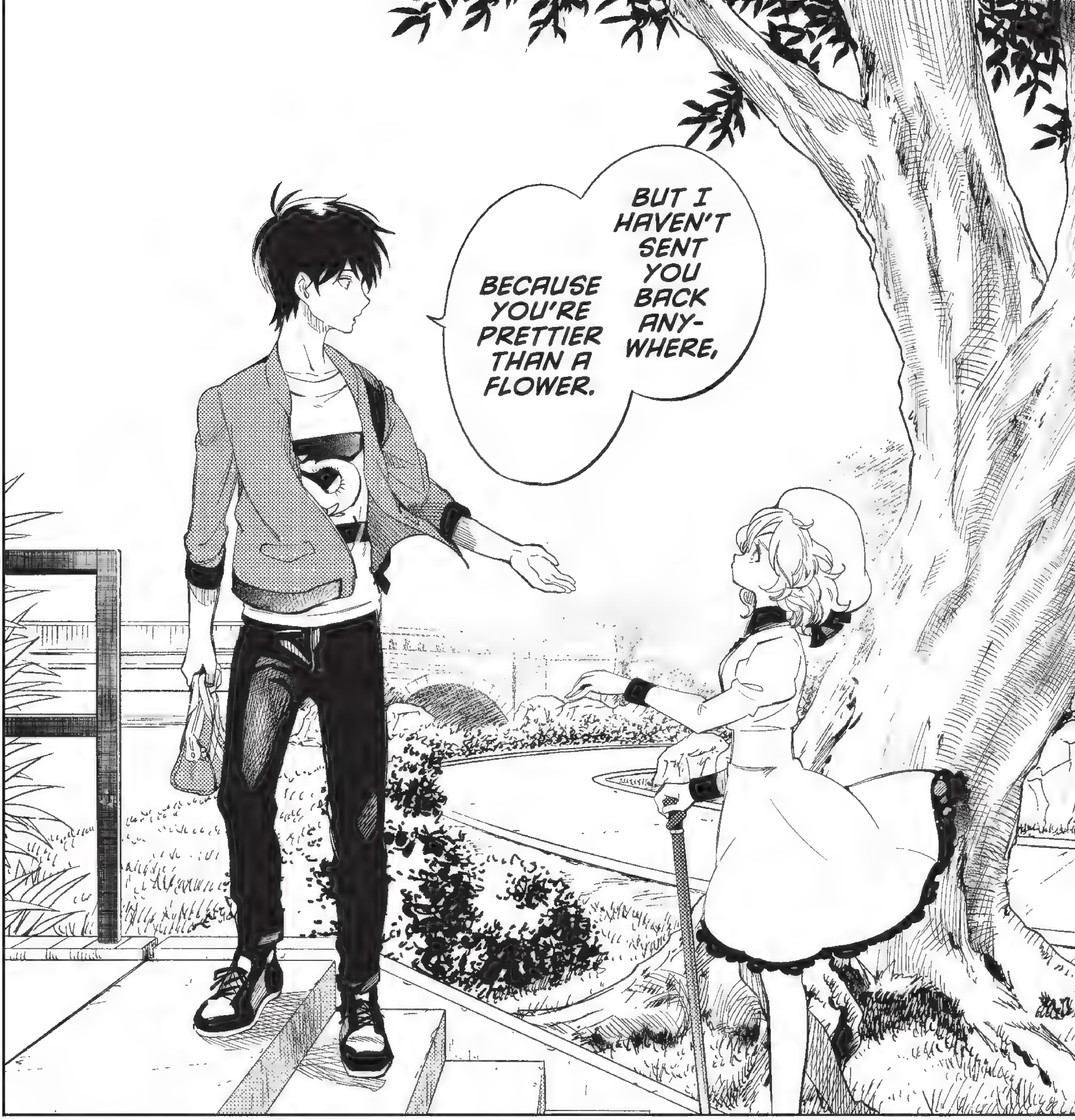
*ROCKS

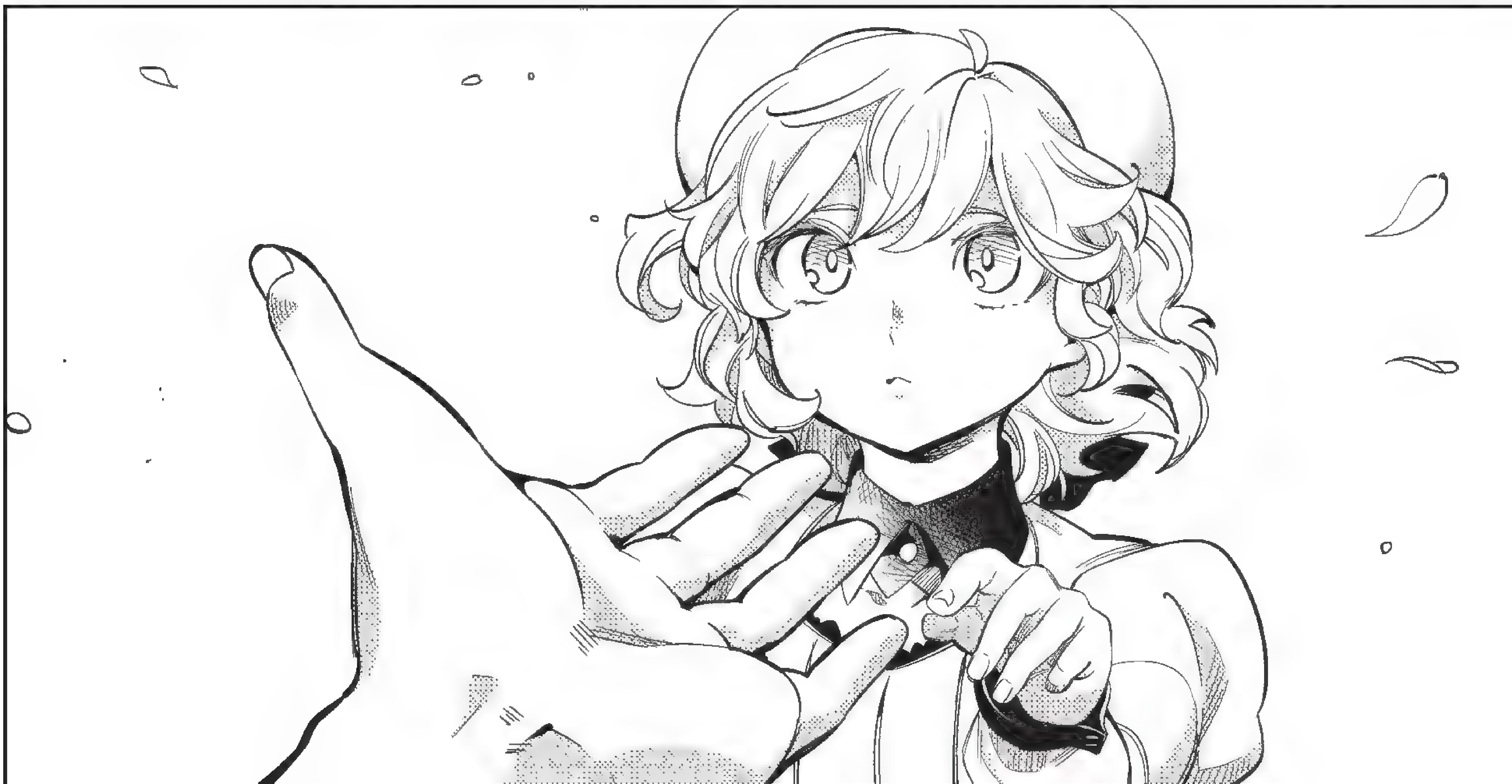

SHE WAS GIVEN LIFE AS ETERNAL AS THE ROCKS...
...NEVER CHANGING MONTH AFTER MONTH, YEAR AFTER YEAR.


BUT BECAUSE HE REFUSED TO TAKE HER AS HIS WIFE,
NINIGI-NO-MIKOTO AND HIS PROGENY...
...WERE GRANTED ONLY SHORT LIVES,
THAT SCATTERED LIKE THE FLOWERS ON THE TREES.

THAT IS HOW HUMANS BECAME MORTAL.
THEN YOU GET IT, RIGHT?
I'M IMMORTAL. I DON'T BELONG...
...WITH KONOHANA-NO-SAKUYA-BIME.
I NEED IWANAGA-HIME.


YOU THINK YOU'RE SO CLEVER, DON'T YOU?
SHOONK
BUT SURELY YOU KNOW *WHY* IWANAGA-HIME WAS SENT BACK HOME?
CLACK
JUST FORGET ABOUT THE MINOR DETAILS.
IT IS NOT A *MINOR* DETAIL.
IWANAGA-HIME WAS SENT HOME BECAUSE SHE WAS UGLY.
YOU PICKED THE EXACT WRONG METAPHOR TO IMPRESS A GIRL.


BUT I HAVEN'T SENT YOU BACK ANYWHERE,
BECAUSE YOU'RE PRETTIER THAN A FLOWER.



ぺ
WHAP
ちん
EITHER WAY.
カ
KA-CLACK
コツ
YOU SHOULDN'T JUDGE PEOPLE BY THEIR APPEARANCE.
RUFFLE
くしゃ
YOU'RE JUST AN AMALGAMATION OF MERMAID AND KUDAN.
DON'T TALK LIKE YOU'RE SUCH HOT STUFF.
?
カッ
CLACK
CLACK
カッ
TEP
ト
TEP
ト

SENPAI.
WILL YOU BE STAYING AT MY HOUSE TONIGHT?
MY PARENTS HAVE BEEN WANTING TO SEE YOU.
GOOD POINT. I NEED TO THANK THEM FOR ALL THEY'VE DONE FOR ME.
PLEASE, DON'T BE SO FORMAL.
JUST THINK OF IT AS YOUR OWN HOME AND THEM AS YOUR OWN PARENTS, AND ALL PROBLEMS...
WILL *NOT* BE SOLVED.
I CAN'T LET YOU FENCE ME IN JUST YET.

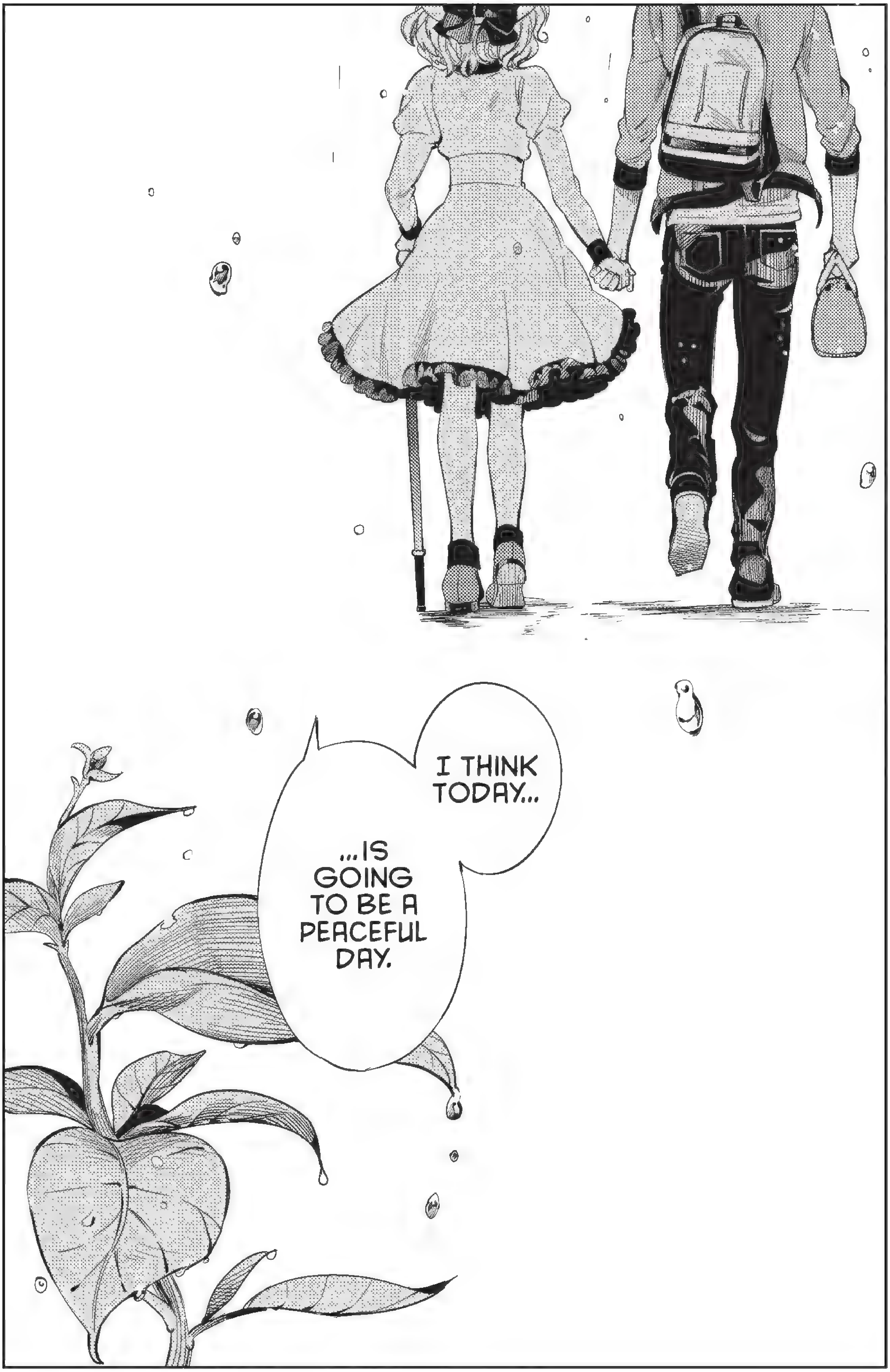
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN STILL GET AWAY FROM ME?
DRIP
DRIP

IN THIS WORLD...
SHH
サァァ
...THERE ARE YÔKAI, MONSTERS...
...SPECTRES.
SPIRITS...
...DEMONS...
...AND GHOSTS.

CREATURES BY THOSE NAMES EXIST, JUST LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE.
THERE IS REASON THAT TRANSCENDS REASON—LOGIC AND ILLOGIC GO HAND IN HAND.

BUT THERE'S NO NEED TO FEAR.
BECAUSE THERE IS ORDER IN ALL THINGS.
WHATEVER METHODS RIKKA-SAN MAY ATTEMPT,
WHATEVER THOUGHTS DRIVE HER SEARCH FOR A NEW GOD...

...I SWEAR I'LL DEFEND THAT ORDER.
IF NECESSARY, I WILL INVENT A RATIONAL FICTION...
...A FICTION THAT TRANSCENDS TRUTH.
FROM THAT SPACE BETWEEN TRUTH AND LIES, I WILL DEFEND THIS WORLD.


I THINK TODAY...
...IS GOING TO BE A PEACEFUL DAY.

◆ *TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 7*

IN/SPECTRE

Something Like a Conclusion from the Author

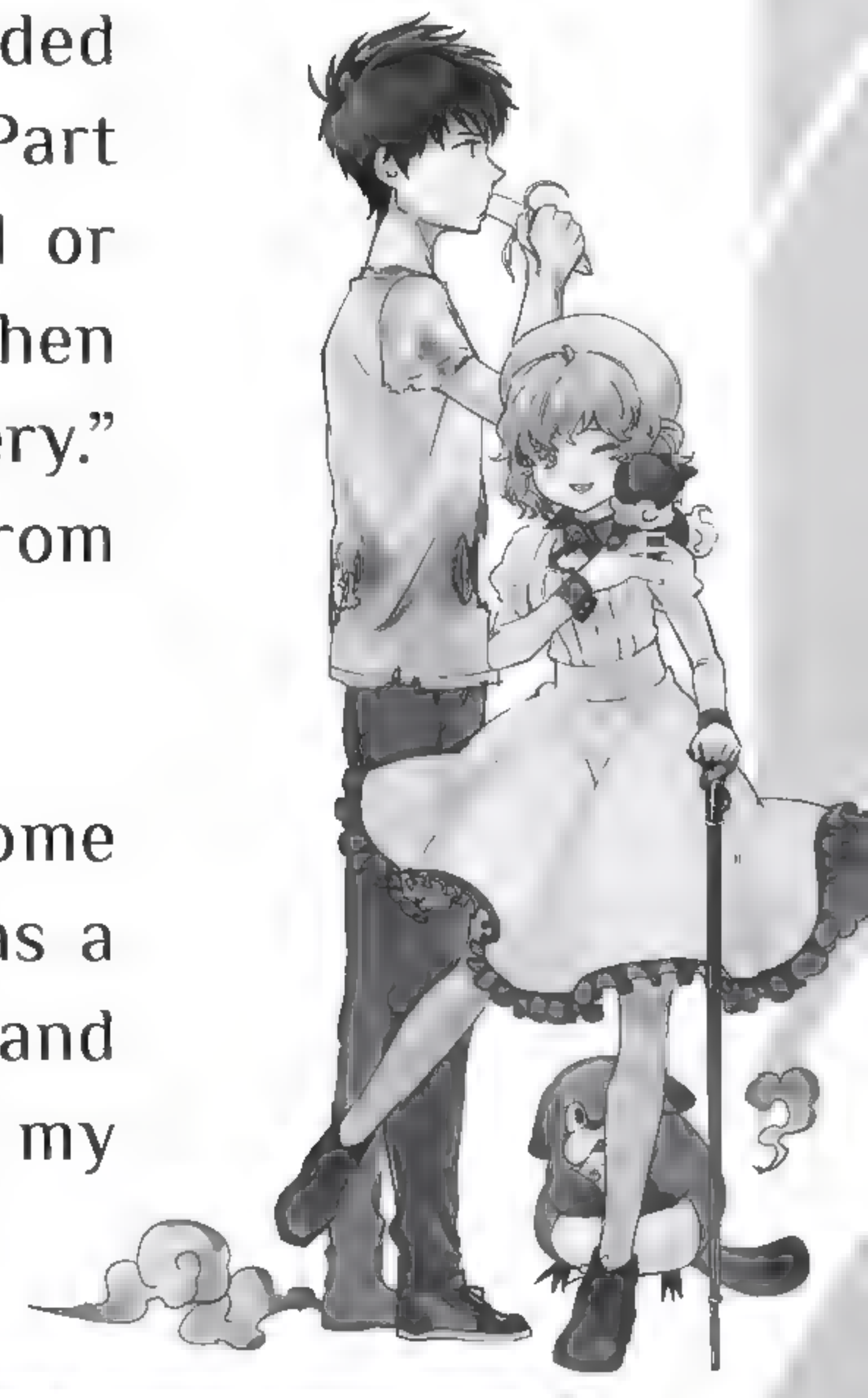
I am the author, Kyo Shirodaira, and this is volume six. It's really thick compared to previous volumes. Don't worry; you're not seeing things.

After all this time, the Steel Lady Nanase case is resolved. Thank you all for reading, and thank you, Chashiba Katase-sensei, for your hard work. I mean, I've done nothing on any of this, so that's all I can say.

As the author of the original novel, I had big concerns before the manga started about whether or not this story, with its heaps of exposition, topped with piles of fictional explanations, would even work as a manga, but then, after the series started, my bigger concern was that I needed to prepare myself so that when I heard people say, "The manga is ***way*** better than the book," I would be able to respond in a mature manner, so you never know how things will turn out. Although I suspect part of the problem is my own habit of doing something to stir up my anxiety no matter how things go.

Now as for the story, the case is solved like in a real mystery story, but I think opinions are going to be divided about whether or not it really qualifies as a mystery. Part of it will be whether you define "mystery" in broad or narrow terms, and then it gets even more difficult when you try to measure it on the scale of "authentic mystery." It may also depend on what you as readers expect from your mystery stories.

Even when I personally have come into contact with some stories, my opinion was, "This doesn't really count as a mystery, but it moved me like a mystery story does, and serious mystery fans should like it," but with others, my feelings were more complicated, as in, "This meets all the requirements of a mystery, but I can't really see it as a mystery."



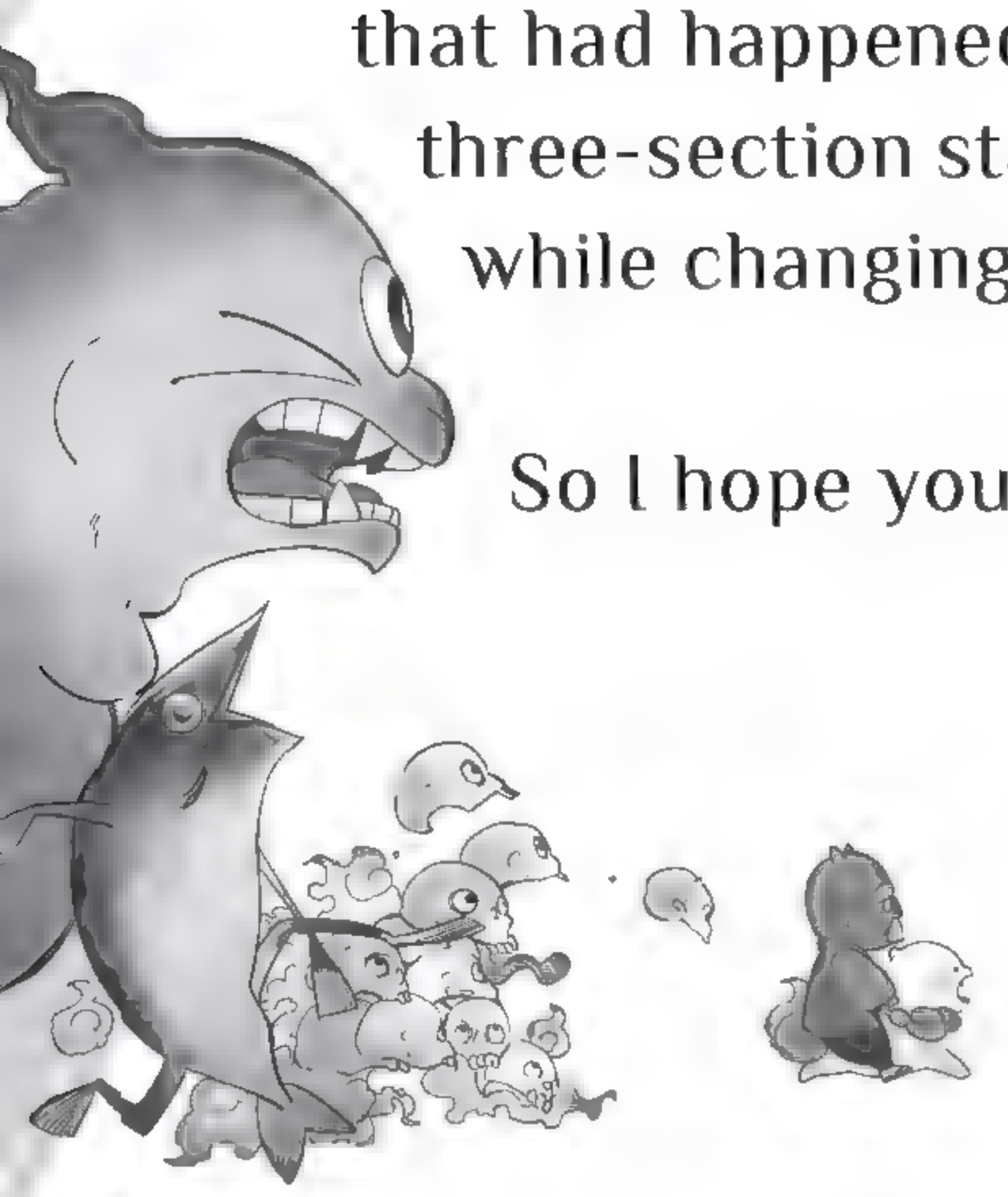
It seems that I find that mystery-style of fun in stories where the characters find the logic in a situation, put everything in its proper place, and then uncover the truth or try to restore order.

And as for this story, Kotoko Iwanaga states definitively that she is the one who keeps order. The act of taking a situation that has been disrupted by the unreasonable or the bizarre, and putting it back in order, even by use of fiction, is a big part of what makes a story an authentic mystery...I think.

The Steel Lady Nanase case has been solved, but the story continues. My time as the do-nothing original author has come to an end, alas. As I go on, I think, "This wouldn't be happening if Katase-sensei would charge into the editorial department with a three-section staff demanding, 'I can't stand turning such a wordy story into pictures any longer!'," but if that had happened, I would probably be the first one to be hit with that three-section staff, so I think I will humbly continue work on this story while changing some things here and there.

So I hope you will read the next volume.

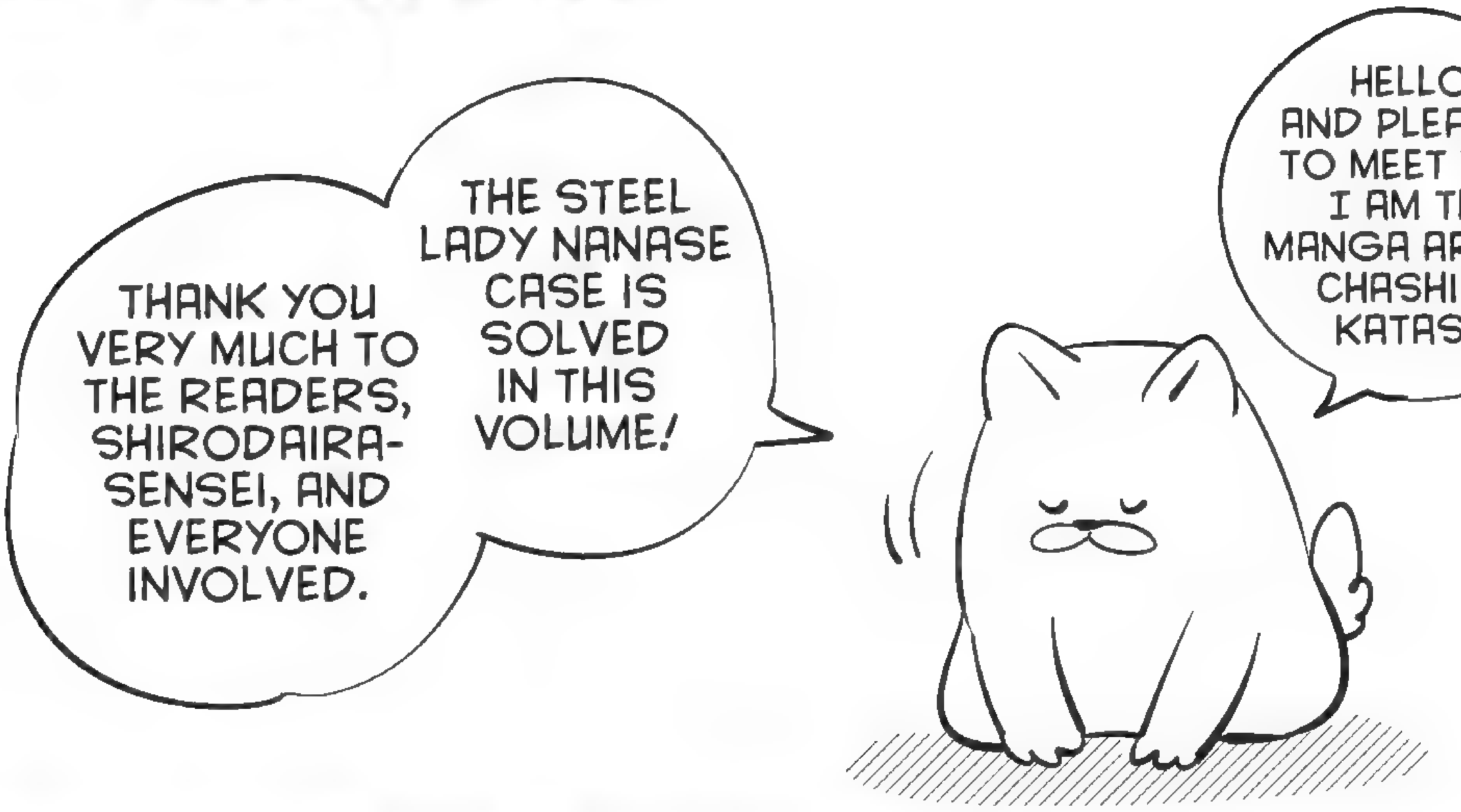
Kyo Shirodaira

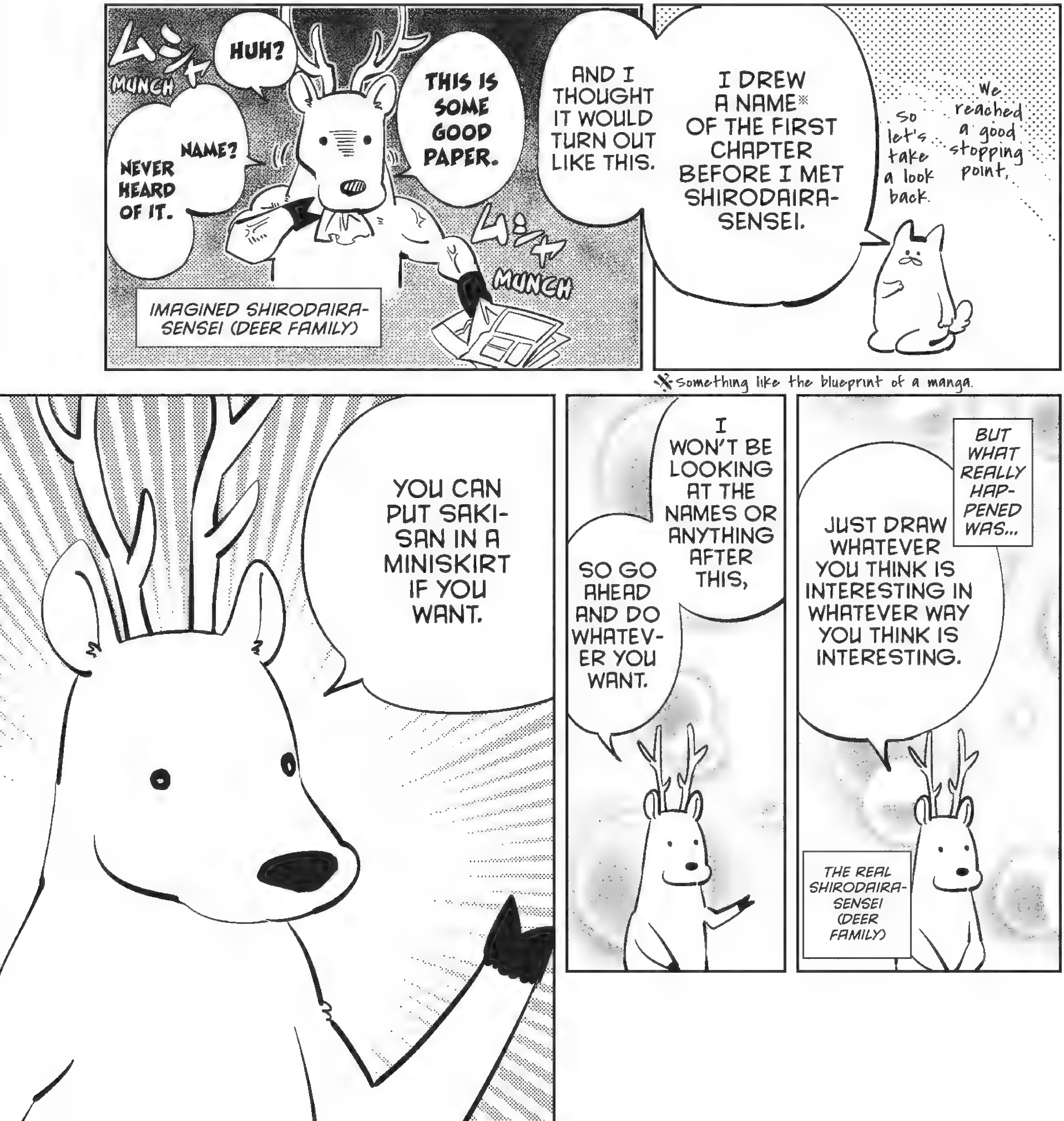


BONUS

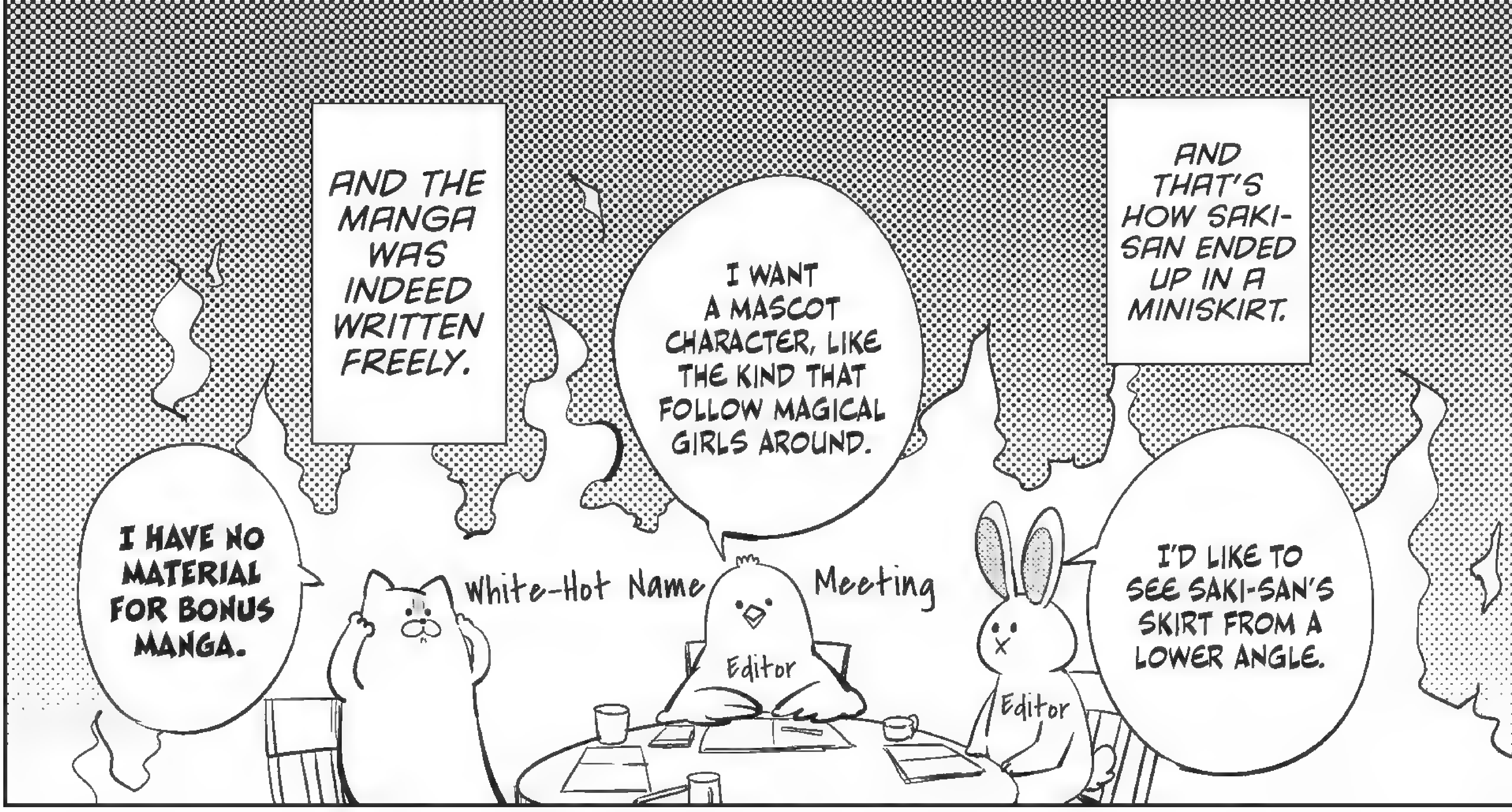
WITH THE 13TH CHAPTER OF THE MANGA VERSION OF *IN/SPECTRE,* WE HAVE REGISTERED AS HUSBAND AND WIFE.
I OWE IT ALL TO YOU READERS. YOU HAVE MY DEEPEST GRATITUDE.
THE WHOLE "LIES ARE OKAY" THING IS OVER NOW.
THE NEXT VOLUME WILL BE THE START OF THE SEQUEL!
The story's still going!!
HUH?
REALLY?
BUT WE FINISHED EVERYTHING FROM THE NOVEL.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT! THEY'RE TURNING A BRAND-NEW STORY INTO A COMIC!
They're going to publish a novel version, too!
Nice!
OUR NEXT CHAPTER! IS A DAY IN THE LIFE OF KOTOKO AND KURÔ...
FREQUENTLY VISITED RESTAURANTS ARC.
...WAIT.
HOW MUCH OF THIS IS TRUE?
MAGAZINE R
FIN

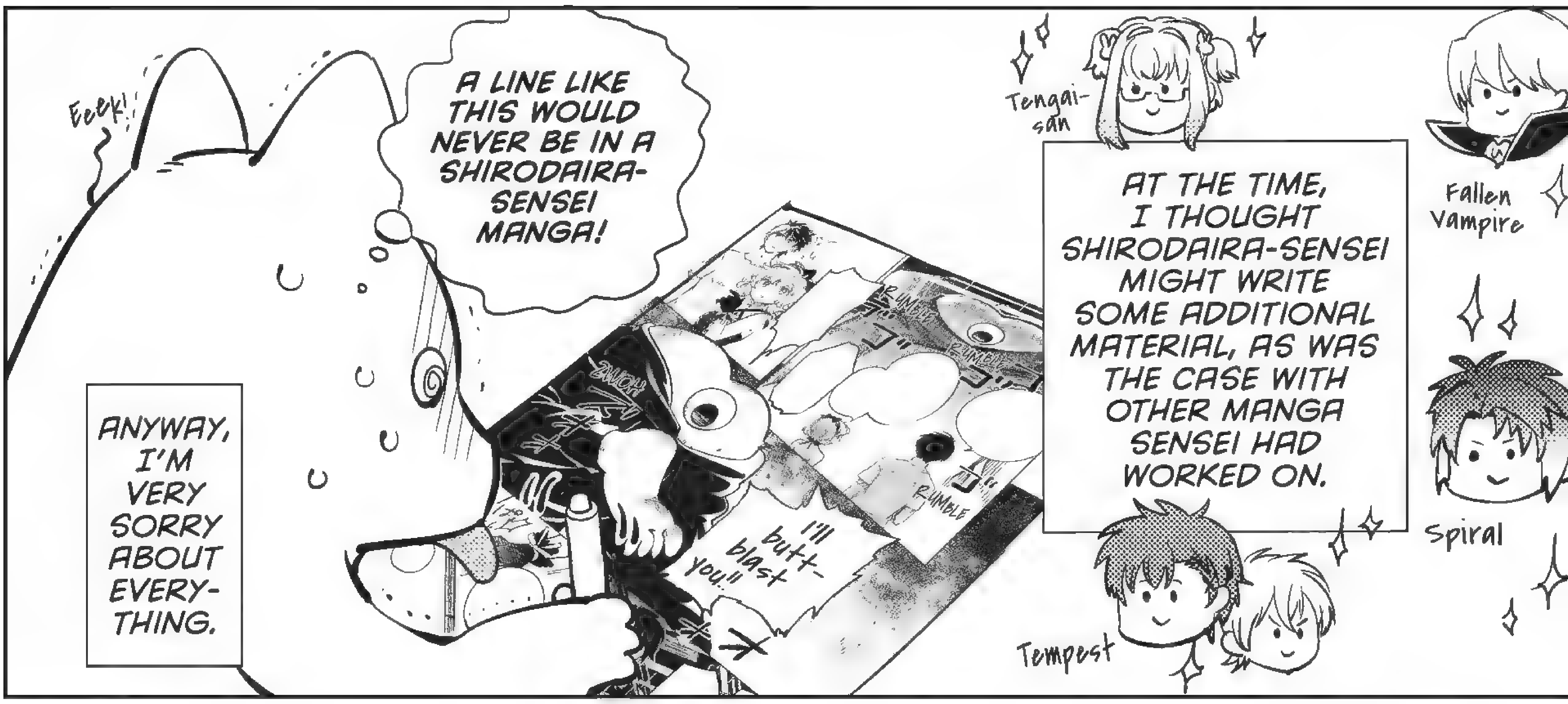
AFTERWORD

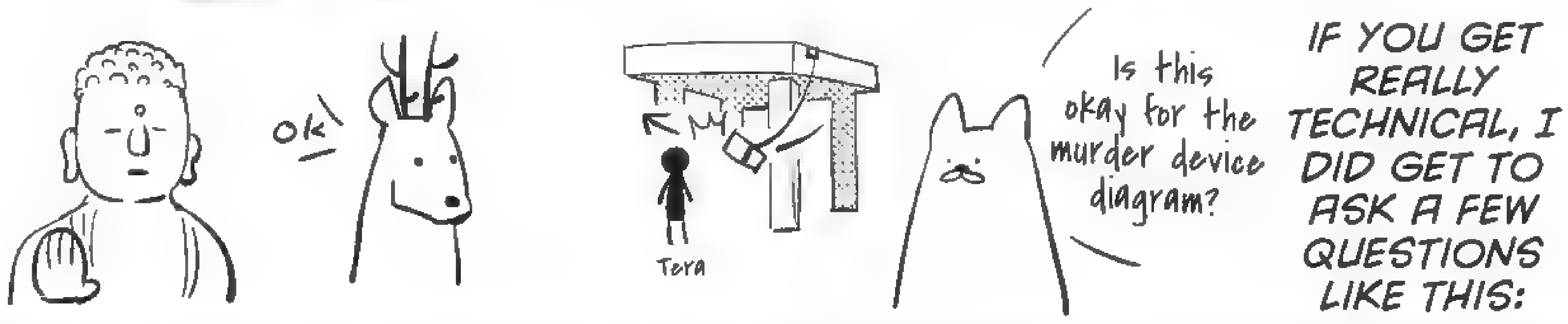

HELLO, AND PLEASED TO MEET YOU. I AM THE MANGA ARTIST, CHASHIBA KATASE.
THE STEEL LADY NANASE CASE IS SOLVED IN THIS VOLUME!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH TO THE READERS, SHIRODAIRA-SENSEI, AND EVERYONE INVOLVED.

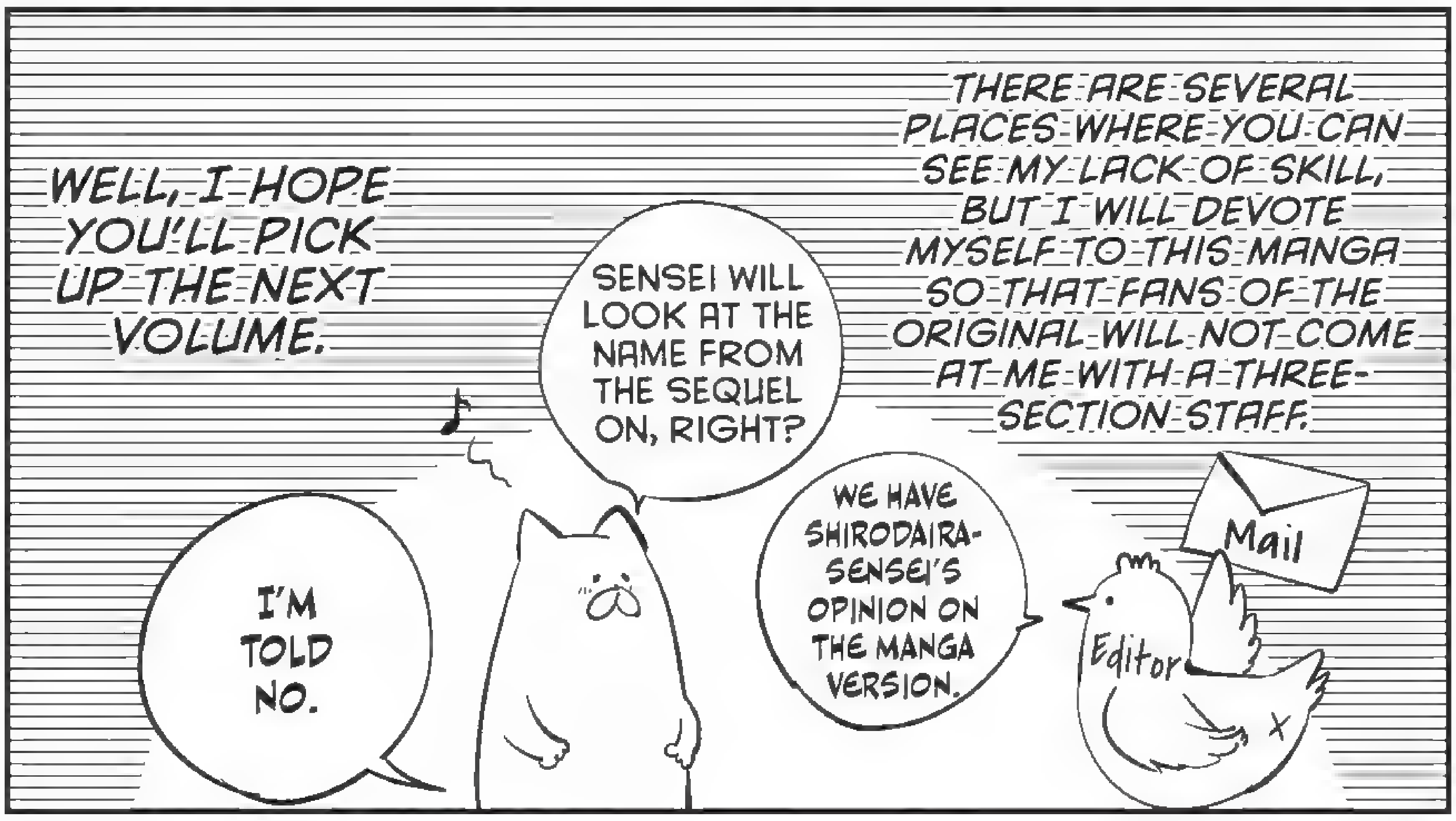

We reached a good stopping point,
So let's take a look back.
I DREW A NAME※ OF THE FIRST CHAPTER BEFORE I MET SHIRODAIRA-SENSEI.
AND I THOUGHT IT WOULD TURN OUT LIKE THIS.
THIS IS SOME GOOD PAPER.
ムシャ
MUNCH
HUH?
NAME? NEVER HEARD OF IT.
ムシャ
MUNCH
IMAGINED SHIRODAIRA-SENSEI (DEER FAMILY)
BUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED WAS...
JUST DRAW WHATEVER YOU THINK IS INTERESTING IN WHATEVER WAY YOU THINK IS INTERESTING.
THE REAL SHIRODAIRA-SENSEI (DEER FAMILY)
I WON'T BE LOOKING AT THE NAMES OR ANYTHING AFTER THIS,
SO GO AHEAD AND DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
YOU CAN PUT SAKI-SAN IN A MINISKIRT IF YOU WANT.

※Something like the blueprint of a manga.


AND THAT'S HOW SAKI-SAN ENDED UP IN A MINISKIRT.
I'D LIKE TO SEE SAKI-SAN'S SKIRT FROM A LOWER ANGLE.
Editor
I WANT A MASCOT CHARACTER, LIKE THE KIND THAT FOLLOW MAGICAL GIRLS AROUND.
Editor
White-Hot Name Meeting
AND THE MANGA WAS INDEED WRITTEN FREELY.
I HAVE NO MATERIAL FOR BONUS MANGA.


Fallen Vampire
Spiral
Tengai-san
AT THE TIME, I THOUGHT SHIRODAIRA-SENSEI MIGHT WRITE SOME ADDITIONAL MATERIAL, AS WAS THE CASE WITH OTHER MANGA SENSEI HAD WORKED ON.
Tempest
RUMBLE
I'll butt-blast you!!
A LINE LIKE THIS WOULD NEVER BE IN A SHIRODAIRA-SENSEI MANGA!
Eeek!
ANYWAY, I'M VERY SORRY ABOUT EVERYTHING.


IF YOU GET REALLY TECHNICAL, I DID GET TO ASK A FEW QUESTIONS LIKE THIS:
Is this okay for the murder device diagram?
Tera
ok!


THERE ARE SEVERAL PLACES WHERE YOU CAN SEE MY LACK OF SKILL, BUT I WILL DEVOTE MYSELF TO THIS MANGA SO THAT FANS OF THE ORIGINAL WILL NOT COME AT ME WITH A THREE-SECTION STAFF.
Mail
Editor
WE HAVE SHIRODAIRA-SENSEI'S OPINION ON THE MANGA VERSION.
SENSEI WILL LOOK AT THE NAME FROM THE SEQUEL ON, RIGHT?
I'M TOLD NO.
WELL, I HOPE YOU'LL PICK UP THE NEXT VOLUME.

STAFF

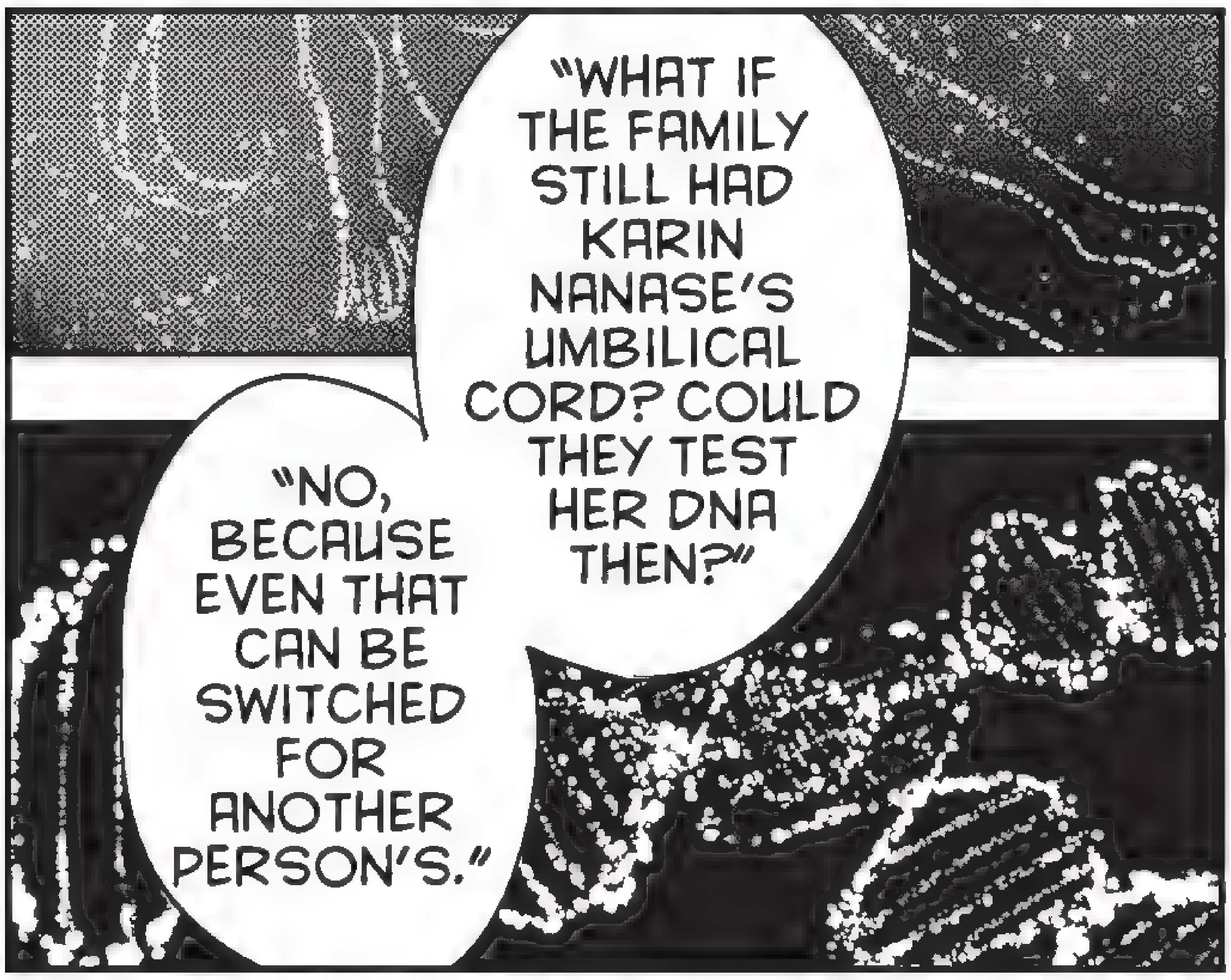
Otôtamu
Tonpu
Asai
Kuro shima

EDITORS

O-kawa
T-da (honorifics excluded)

IN/SPECTRE

TRANSLATION NOTES

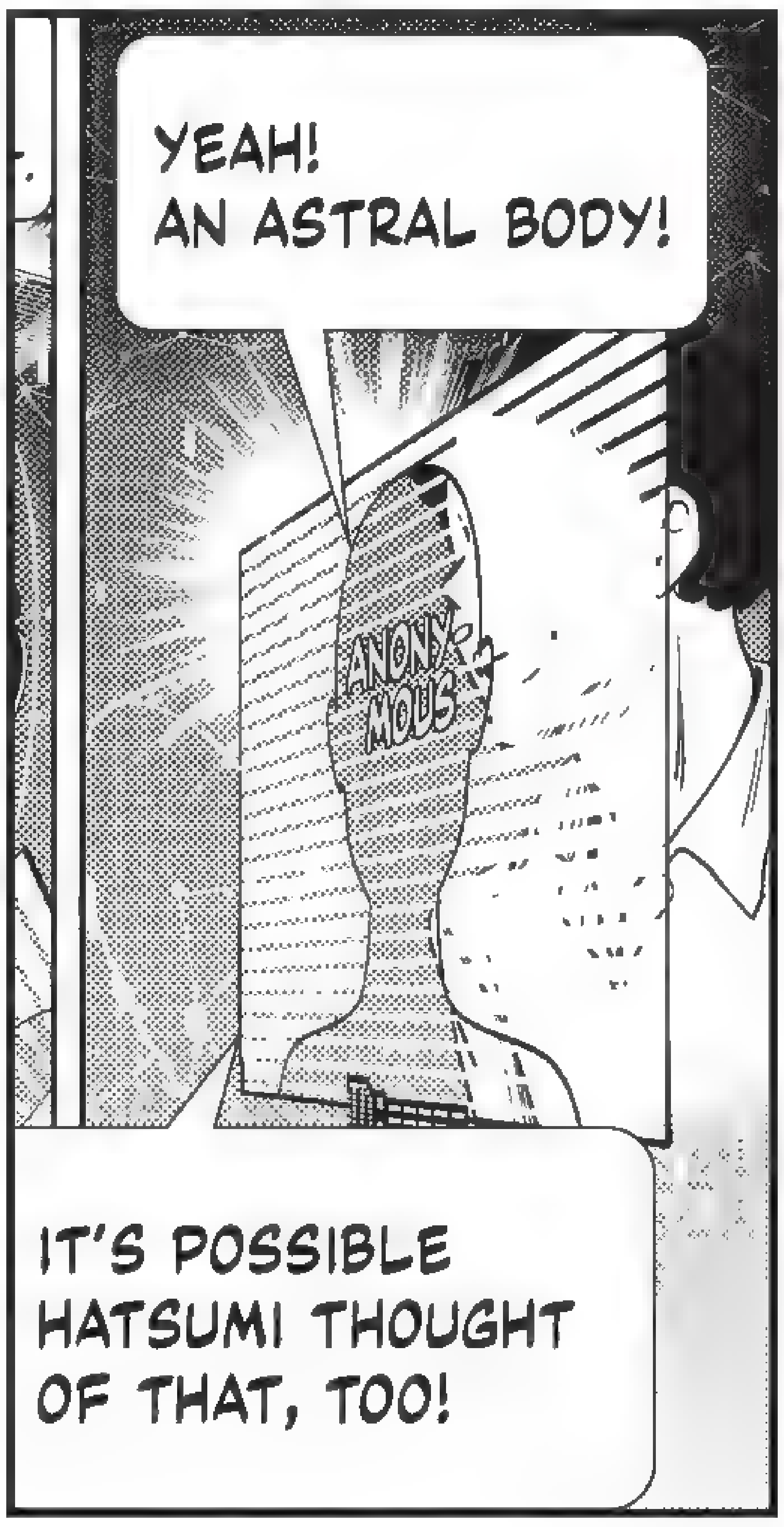

"WHAT IF THE FAMILY STILL HAD KARIN NANASE'S UMBILICAL CORD? COULD THEY TEST HER DNA THEN?"
"NO, BECAUSE EVEN THAT CAN BE SWITCHED FOR ANOTHER PERSON'S."

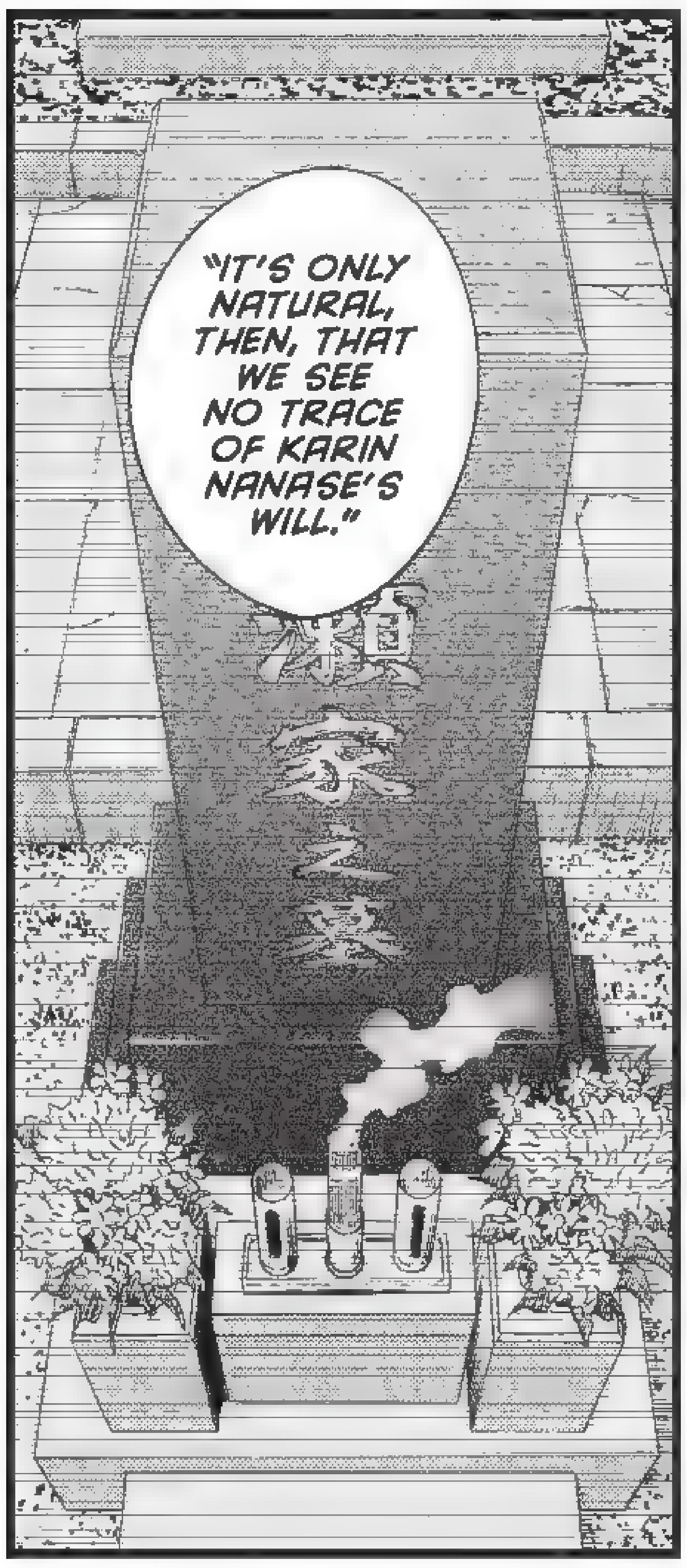
Karin Nanase's umbilical cord, page 23

When a baby is born in Japan, it is customary to keep part of his or her umbilical cord as a memento. As the thing that used to literally connect the child to his or her mother, it now symbolizes the bond between them. If Karin Nanase's parents followed this custom and were keeping the umbilical cord somewhere, it could be used for DNA testing, assuming it hadn't been switched.

Astral body, page 47

Japanese term used here is *ikiryô*, which roughly translates to "spirit of the living." In Japanese folklore, there is a belief that if a living person feels strongly enough about something or someone, usually in a negative way, their spirit will leave their body to do something about those feelings—for example, curse a love rival, or seek revenge against the one who brought about her untimely demise.


YEAH! AN ASTRAL BODY!
ANONYMOUS
IT'S POSSIBLE HATSUMI THOUGHT OF THAT, TOO!

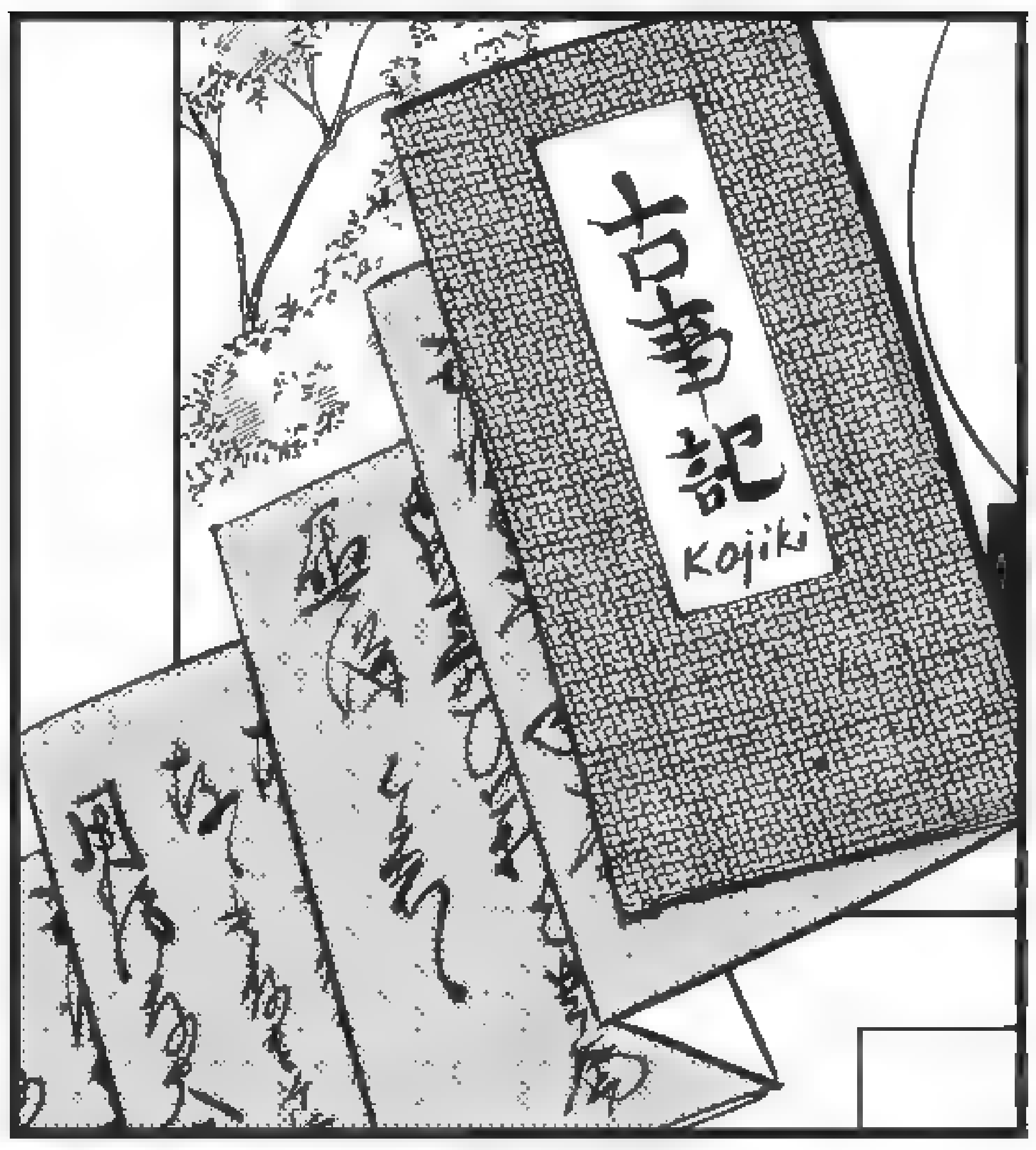

"IT'S ONLY NATURAL, THEN, THAT WE SEE NO TRACE OF KARIN NANASE'S WILL."
七瀬家之墓

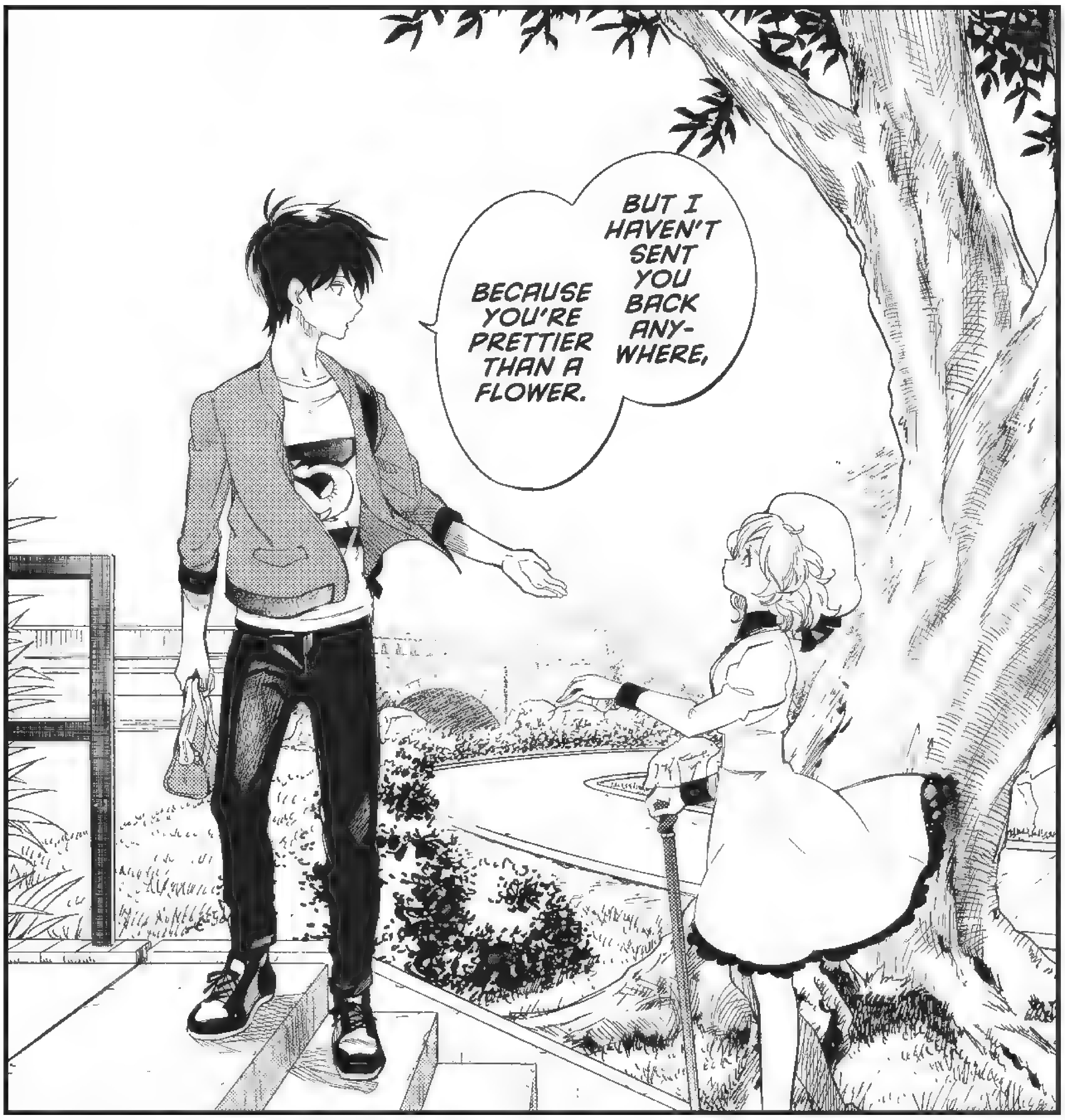
Nanase Family Tomb, page 49

In Japan, the bodies of the deceased are usually cremated, and their ashes are places in urns. For this reason, it is not uncommon for a family to share a tombstone, with a chamber underneath for housing the urns.

Kojiki, page 226

The *Kojiki*, or “Records of Ancient Matters,” is the oldest written record of Japan. It contains many stories from Japanese mythology, including the creation myth, and the story of Iwanaga-hime.




BUT I HAVEN'T SENT YOU BACK ANY-WHERE,
BECAUSE YOU'RE PRETTIER THAN A FLOWER.

Scattered like the flowers on the trees, page 229

The significance of this metaphor is that the name of the princess that was accepted as a wife, Konohana-no-Sakuya-bime, means roughly “princess blossoming brilliantly like the flowers on the trees.” Although she was very beautiful, her life was as fleeting as the flowers, that bloom for a season and are scattered by the wind. Ôyamatsumi’s hope in giving both sisters to Ninigi-no-Mikoto is that his posterity would be both as beautiful as the flowers and as long-lived as the rocks. It may also be worth noting that while Kotoko shares her name with Iwanaga-hime, Saki and Rikka both have names more closely related to flowers. Rikka’s name is even more fleeting, as it can mean “six flowers” or “snowflake.”

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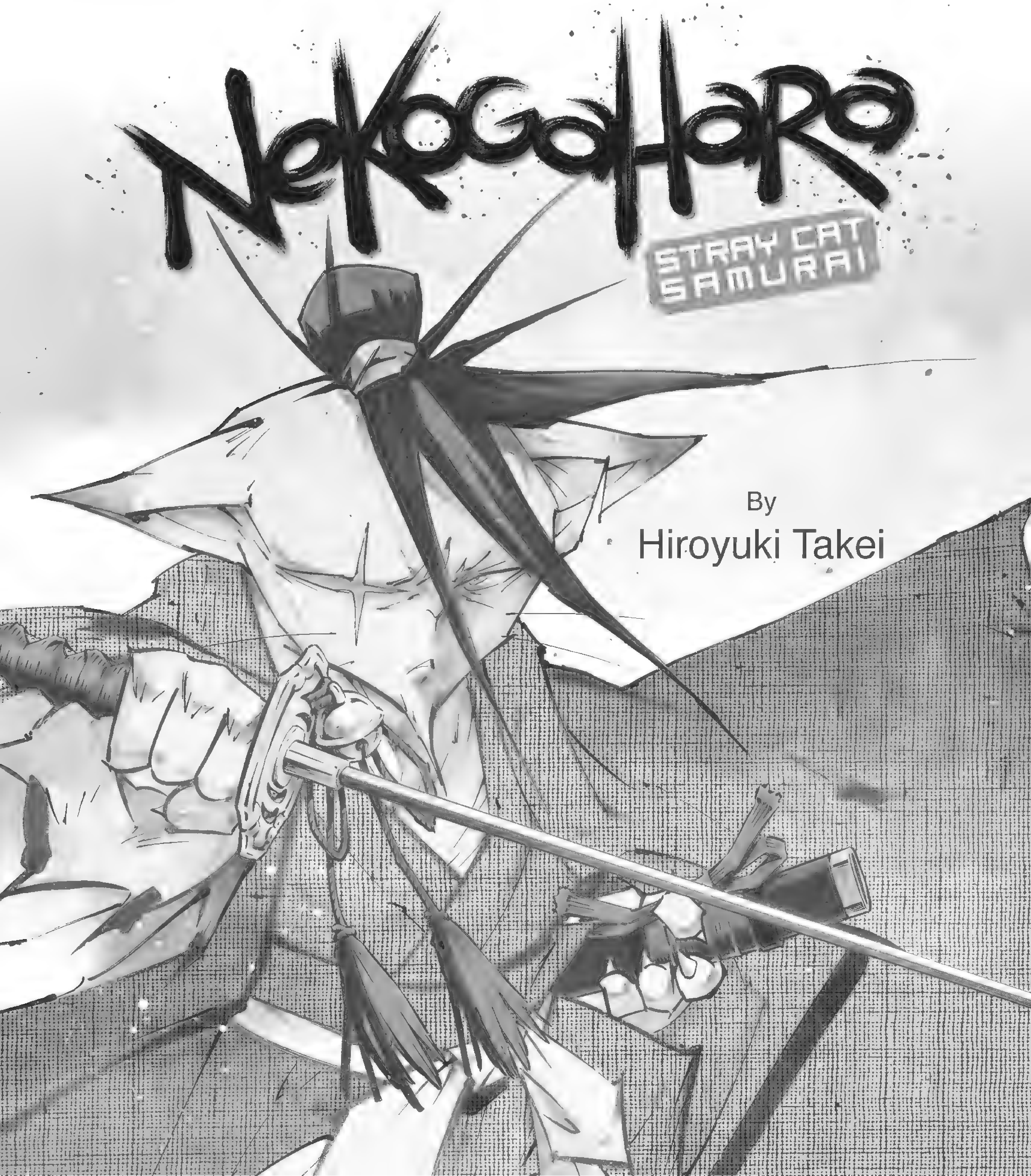
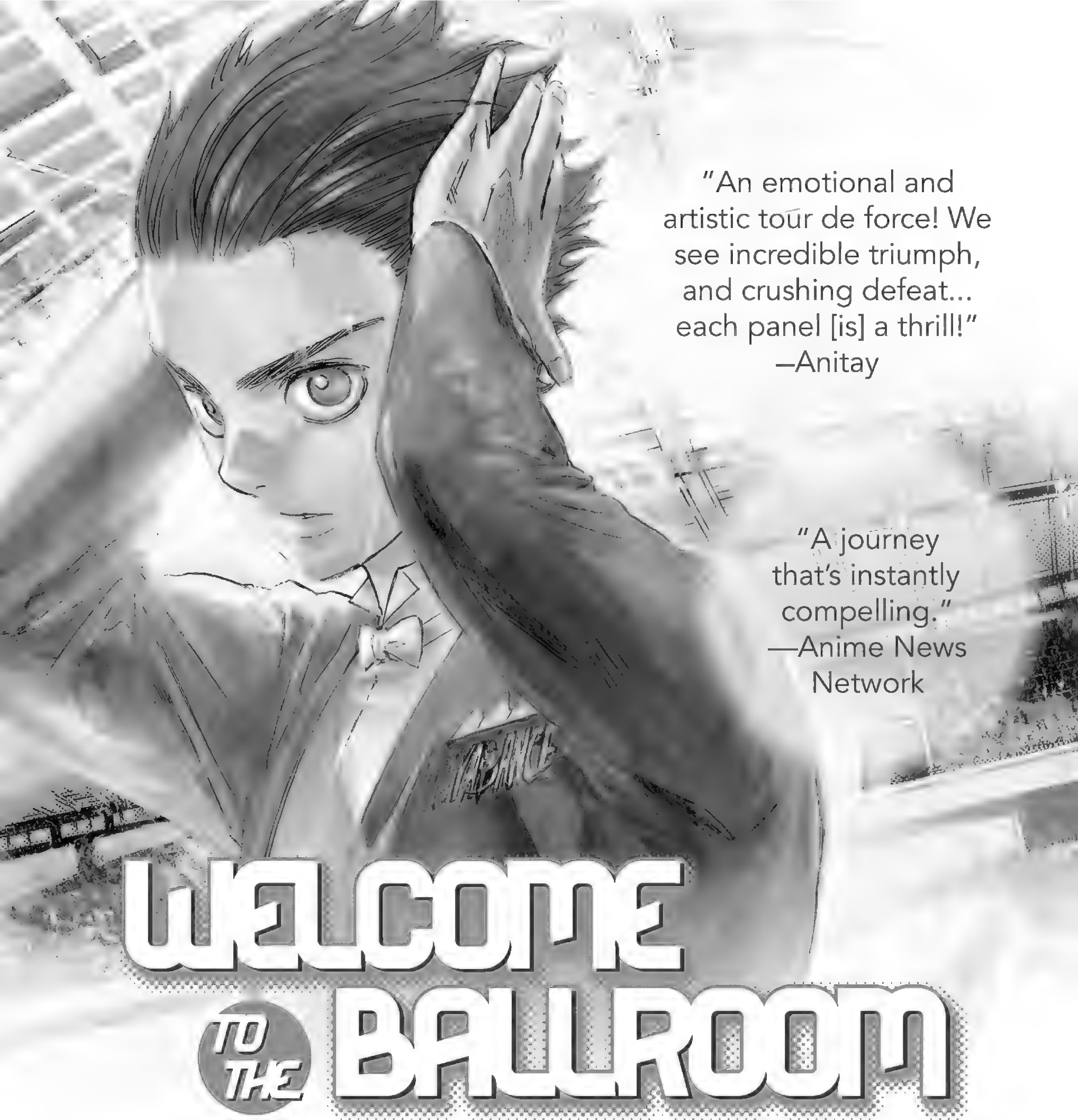
New action series from Hiroyuki Takei, creator of the classic shonen franchise Shaman King!

In medieval Japan, a bell hanging on the collar is a sign that a cat has a master. Norachiyo's bell hangs from his katana sheath, but he is nonetheless a stray — a ronin. This one-eyed cat samurai travels across a dishonest world, cutting through pretense and deception with his blade.


NEKOGAHARA
STRAY CAT SAMURAI
By
Hiroyuki Takei



"An emotional and
artistic tour de force! We
see incredible triumph,
and crushing defeat...
each panel [is] a thrill!"
–Anitay

"A journey
that's instantly
compelling."
—Anime News
Network

WELCOME TO THE BALLROOM

By Tomo Takeuchi

Feckless high school student Tatara Fujita wants to be good at something—anything. Unfortunately, he's about as average as a slouchy teen can be. The local bullies know this, and make it a habit to hit him up for cash, but all that changes when the debonair Kaname Sengoku sends them packing. Sengoku's not the neighborhood watch, though. He's a professional ballroom dancer. And once Tatara Fujita gets pulled into the world of ballroom, his life will never be the same.

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The Black Museum The Ghost and the Lady

By Kazuhiro Fujita

Deep in Scotland Yard in London sits an evidence room dedicated to the greatest mysteries of British history. In this "Black Museum" sits a misshapen hunk of lead—two bullets fused together—the key to a wartime encounter between Florence Nightingale, the mother of modern nursing, and a supernatural Man in Grey. This story is unknown to most scholars of history, but a special guest of the museum will tell the tale of *The Ghost and the Lady*...

Praise for Kazuhiro Fujita's *Ushio and Tora*

"A charming revival that combines a classic look with modern depth and pacing... **Essential viewing both for curmudgeons and new fans alike.**" — Anime News Network

"**GREAT!** The first episode of *Ushio and Tora* captures the essence of '90s anime." — IGN

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HAPPINESS

ハピネス

By **Shuzo Oshimi**

From the creator of *The Flowers of Evil*

Nothing interesting is happening in Makoto Ozaki's first year of high school. HIs life is a series of quiet humiliations: low-grade bullies, unreliable friends, and the constant frustration of his adolescent lust. But one night, a pale, thin girl knocks him to the ground in an alley and offers him a choice.

Now everything is different. Daylight is searingly bright. Food tastes awful. And worse than anything is the terrible, consuming thirst...

Praise for Shuzo Oshimi's *The Flowers of Evil*

"A shockingly readable story that vividly—one might even say queasily—evokes the fear and confusion of discovering one's own sexuality. Recommended." —The Manga Critic

"A page-turning tale of sordid middle school blackmail." —Otaku USA Magazine

"A stunning new horror manga." —Third Eye Comics

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In/Spectre 6

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